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SEPTEMBER 2010



NARFE 31ST NATIONAL CONVENTION

As you read this article, NARFE'S 31ST Biennial National Convention is now in the history books. This is also NARFE'S 90th year. The following officers were elected for the next two years. Joseph Beaudoin was elected NARFE National President, Paul Carew elected National Vice President, Elaine Hughes elected National Secretary, and Charles Saylor elected National Treasurer. Don Stewart was elected Regional Vice President for Region III. Don is from Coral Gables, Florida.

Delegates to the NARFE National Convention approved a resolution to increase dues in balloting on Wednesday. The committee-backed resolution called for an increase in annual dues to \$34.00. Resolution amended from the floor and approved by the delegates at the polls. The new dues structure is \$40.00 for one year, \$72.00 for two years and \$102.00 for three years. Dues withholding is set at \$34.00 annually. The amounts are for national dues only; it is still up to chapters to set their own dues. New rates will go into effect January 1, 2011.

Recruitment and Retention were the main topics of the convention. NARFE is losing members at an alarming rate. Members must put forth a more aggressive effort to build our membership counts. The loss in members has contributed to the financial problems at NARFE.

At the Region III Caucus Meeting, each district expounded on what they were doing for retention and recruitment. Chapter 1154, a medium size chapter, and Ed Fleck, recruitment chair for the Florida Federation, were tied in second place for the recruitment contest.

While a lot of Floridians attended this year's NARFE National Convention, a special tip of the hat to Lloyd Pearson, President, Jacksonville Chapter 172 who attended his 17th consecutive convention. His first was in New Orleans in 1978.

FEDERATION CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 27; 10:00 AM, Executive Board Meeting
(Electronic, Gotowebinar)

February 3-4; 3:00 PM, Executive Board Meeting
(Hilton Hotel)

May 2; 1:00 PM, Financial Budget Meeting
(Hilton Hotel)

May 3-5; 8:30 AM, Federation Convention

Ken Carter, President, NARFE Florida Inc

NARFE NATIONAL CONVENTION

When asked to write a human interest article about the Convention for the Federation newsletter I had no idea what I was going to write about. After attending the convention in Grand Rapids I find I could go on for a very long time about my experience there. You see this was my first NARFE National Convention. To say I was impressed would be an understatement. It was so well organized, everything was on time-to the minute. National President Margaret Baptiste did a wonderful job of keeping us on track. She is such a wonderful lady, and fun too.

We had both morning and afternoon sessions for business with several evenings of activities. The "Michigan Night at the Museum" on Tuesday was a treat for all who attended. We could walk just over

the bridge to the museum, or we could ride the free bus. Bob and I walked over but rode back. We were just too tired to walk another step. The indoor merry-go-round was extremely popular. Even Ms. Baptiste enjoyed her ride on it.

The banquet on Thursday night was very impressive, and delicious. We were served steak and salmon on each plate. The dessert was a cheesecake with a Happy Birthday NARFE in the middle. It too was quite delicious.

The direct flight to and from Grand Rapids was great. Only 2 hours 20 minutes from Orlando.

We are looking forward to Reno in 2012.

Jane Lemley,
Florida Federation VP

DUES WITHHOLDING CONTEST 2010-2011

The Annual Dues Withholding Contest for 2010-11 is off to a good start, even with a lot of chapters not meeting during the summer months.

Districts #3 and #11 have already qualified for their own District Contest at the NARFE Convention in May 2011. Both qualified in June, and now #3 has 11 entries and #11 has 6 entries. At this time we have 24 entries from 6 Districts.

The new D/W National dues (passed at the National Convention) are a discounted rate of \$34, an increase of approx. 78 cents per month over the current D/W cost. The \$34 rate is the same rate as the 3 year discounted rate of \$102, which has to be paid 3 years ahead. The new D/W rate becomes effective on January 1st at your renewal time. Add your chapter dues and divide by 12 to arrive at your total monthly cost.

Dues Withholding is still the best deal around these days. Think about signing up soon!

For more info call 239-482-6713, or email poandbogre@comcast.net, or go to www.narfeffl.net and click on the D/W link.

Beulah H. Greene,
Federation Dues Withholding Chair

NEW CHAPTER RETENTION PROCEDURE

In July, a new Chapter Retention Procedure was sent to every Florida District President for their use in retention of chapter members. This procedure should have also been shared with the Chapter Membership Chair and any others that work with retention in the chapter.

All chapters are urged to follow this procedure to help strengthen their chapters, and to also strive to establish back up officers for the key officers of their chapters.

When a key officer has an unforeseen emergency that results in a move on their part, in many cases it has a serious effect on their chapter. With a back up member to fill some of these positions, the chapters can survive that situation.

All members should be involved in the retention of chapter members. The time has come that all NARFE members need to become involved in their chapter operations, and volunteering for an office or committee is the best way to get started, and make a commitment to help keep NARFE going. It cannot be left up to the same members having to continue to take on jobs to keep a chapter going.

Since the Convention in May, Bob Lemley and I have continued to work with troubled chapters, providing guidance and support whenever possible to enable them to keep the chapters functioning.

The following new District Retention Members have been added:

District #5, Pat Granger
District #6, Vivian Thomas

All Districts are encouraged to have a District Retention Member to help the DVP's in the event of a chapter facing difficulties.

Jim Greene, Jr
Retention Chair
239-482-6713

Poandbogre@comcast.net

Bob Lemley
Retention Co-Chair
863-607-4844

blemley@mac.com

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS

AUGUST 27 AND SEPTEMBER 3, 2010

As I begin this summary of the NEB meetings, it is being prepared with mixed emotions due to the fact that this will be my last opportunity to report to the members of Region III on the discussions and actions of your National Officers. My greatest concern is the decline in our membership over the past six years. One of my goals has been to stop the loss of members through non-renewals.

Once again, this summary is not the official minutes of our NEB meetings but my recollection of the discussions and actions that occurred during the meetings.

Our August 27th meeting was an abbreviated one where most of the conversation was directed toward planning for the 31st National Convention and the Federation Presidents Meeting scheduled for the following day. We discussed the proposed Dues Increase and methods to be used to get the message to the members in attendance in order to receive approval. A lengthy discussion was held on a proposal that all of the Chapters and Federations would be required to go paperless by January 1, 2011. This option has been available since 2008 with very little response from the Federations and Chapters. Only 135 Chapters and five (5) Federations have taken advantage of this option.

One of NARFE's largest expenses is the printing and mailing of reports to Federations and Chapters. All of the reports being provided to the Chapters and Federations are available on the NARFE website and can be downloaded both in excel and PDF format. In addition via the website, the reports are available earlier in the month. The NEB voted to inform the Federation Presidents and convention attendees of this decision with an effective date of January 1, 2011. The NEB adjourned at approximately 2:00 pm to meet each day at lunch during the convention. The NEB also met with the Federation Presidents at 3:00 pm on August 28, 2010, to listen to their concerns and suggestions for improving operations.

The NEB met on September 3, 2010, at 8:30 am. At this meeting, all newly elected officers were in attendance. These elected officers will comprise the

new NEB in November 2010. After an informal introduction and briefing of the new members, it was decided that the next NEB meeting would be on November 16-18, 2010, at NARFE Headquarters.

At this time, the NEB began discussion on some of the actions that had happened at the convention. With the passage of the Dues Increase, which was to become effective immediately, it was decided to delay the effective date until January 1, 2011, to allow sufficient time for printing of new applications and promotional literature. This change also required the NEB to establish a new First Year Membership Fee of \$45.00. There was also some discussion of the need to change the Life Membership Fee. This fee was to be determined by the National Officers using the available Mortality Charts. Once again, we discussed the decision to go paperless and the concerns that had been expressed by the members during the convention. The decision was made to look at each hardship case and arrange to work with the individual unit to have them pay the printing and postage to receive paper copies of the reports.

Next, we discussed the problem that has been occurring with our dues withholding contests whereby the spouse of a dues withholding member submits an application for membership and have their dues added to the dues withholding of the current member. It was determined that the secretary would issue instructions that membership would process the application and place the spouse on the membership roll and submit the dues withholding to OPM. NARFE will not be able to collect dues until the anniversary date of the dues paying member. (This is an OPM Rule.)
The NEB adjourned at 10:00am.

As I close this summary, I want to thank each of you in Region III for your support and friendship during the past 6 years. Peggy and I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity of getting to know you and working with you has been one of the highlights of our life. We look forward to many more great years of seeing you at conventions and NARFE meetings. I know that you will make Don Stewart just as proud as I am to have served as your Regional VP.

Bob Harrell
Regional III, VP

FROM THE EDITOR

Much has been written, reported, discussed and debated concerning the decrease in NARFE membership over the past decade or so. And this writer does not pretend to have all the answers of how to reverse that trend. However, explanations for why the decrease and suggestions of remedies have been forthcoming during the past several years from many persons and groups.

One of the main reasons for the decrease, according to many, is the advent of the hi-tech age our society has evolved into.

With almost split second, up to the minute news being sent out all around the globe for anyone with a computer (and now with a cell phone), people can get their news and any other information they desire from either item.

All of which leads one to ask, “Why would I want to pay to join an organization when I can get all the information from my computer or cell phone?”

Well my only answer to that is this, “Because what Congress gives, Congress can take away! Which is exactly what they are currently planning to do, and if you don’t care that Congress decreases your earned (retirement) benefits, then you have no reason to whine and complain when it happens”.

I’m sorry if that sounds too harsh, but that’s exactly how it is. If being a realist makes you the bad guy, then so be it.

It baffles me and many others why current employees and retirees are not beating a path to our door to join NARFE, most especially at this particular time with so much on the line. Are they not informed? Do they not understand what is happening in the political arena? All federal civil service personnel, currently employed or retired should be aware of the risk they are facing concerning their earned benefits.

Thus , it is my humble opinion that getting the word to the entire federal civil service community should be a top priority of the National office, every Federation, and every chapter and member throughout NARFE.

Let’s get busy!
Richard A. Carroll, D2VP,
Editor

Don & Mirta Stewart at Don’s campaign table.



Margaret Baptiste and friend enjoy Merry-go-round



L-R; Angel Almodovar, Ken & Evelyn Carter, Daina & Bill Leatham, Arlette & Ken Thomas at Don Stewart’s congratulatory party.



More members enjoying Don Stewart's party



Diana & Bill Leatham (middle) and others enjoying Thursday night banquet.



From the back, the Amway Hotel.



Thursday banquet attendees, L-R, Caroline and Ken Morrison, Jane Lemley, Ben & Margaret Pappa.



Thursday night Birthday cake for each table.



Thursday night, Bob & Peggy Harrell



Bob Lemley and Melinda Atwater



Mr/Mrs Hawlsey & Dean Morgan, Ala. Fed. VP



National President Margaret Baptiste and daughter Annette.



Florida delegation members at Caucus



Thursday night banquet, L-R, John & Slyvia Ventura, Ken Carter, Fl Fed President.



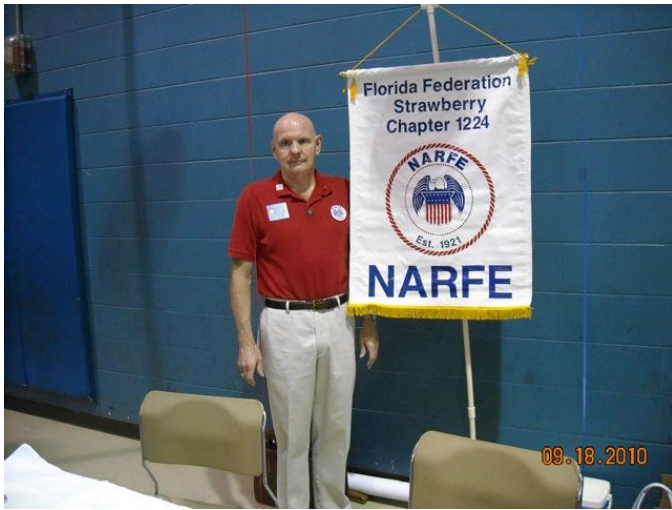
Region III members at Caucus



Highlands City Community Festival

Following pictures taken at Highlands City Community Festival on Saturday, September 18. Several members of Strawberry Chapter 1224 set up an informational and recruitment table to promote NARFE and/or sign up new members. Although there was a relatively small turnout, we handed out four applications and signed up two new members.

Below: Bob Lemley, President, Strawberry Chapter 1224, open for business and raring to recruit.



Below: Bob at table with displays and materials.



Below, Jacki Smith, Strawberry Chapter 1224 VP, Jane Lemley, Florida Federation VP manning the table and ready to sign up new members.



Below, L-R, Jane Lemley, Federation VP and Marcia Johnson, Strawberry Chapter 1224 member.



Below, Highlands City Community Festival activity.



NARFE - membership is not a spectator sport

NARFE is an organization dedicated to protecting your earned health and retirement benefits. Unlike most organizations you might belong to, NARFE is a lobbying organization, an organization that lobbies elected officials and fights for its members every day. As a result, NARFE membership brings responsibilities in addition to paying annual dues to keep the organization open and operating. A lobbying organization only succeeds when it has lots of members and its members are active in support of its mission. Complacency is not acceptable.

Unless a member is infirmed and physically or mentally cannot help, NARFE members must get involved, for instance:

- Join the chapter Calling Tree (Telephone Committee). Members on the Calling Tree call members once a month to see how they are, if they need anything we can provide, and whether they can come to the next chapter meeting. Also, callers call members when we have an Action Alert from NARFE National, so they can take the requested action such as making phone calls, writing letters, sending emails to our elected representatives, etc.

- Provide NARFE with your phone number and email address. If you do not have email, provide us the email of a family member or friend. *Email is the easiest and least expensive way we can*

communicate with each other and you can stay informed.

- **Volunteer for a chapter position. Chapter elections for most chapters are coming up shortly. We all need your help!**

- Attend Chapter meetings.

- Read the Chapter and National websites.

- If they are not getting GEMS messages, call National today and sign up.

Ken Carter, President, NARFE Florida Inc.

MIKE CAUSEY'S FEDERAL REPORT
Beginning next year federal and postal workers (and retirees) will for the first time be able to insure dependent children up to age 26 as part of their FEHBP family plan. Currently dependent children (unless they are permanently disabled) must leave the federal program shortly after their 22nd birthday.

In the past many, if not most, nondisabled dependent children who qualified for FEHBP coverage were in college. But because of the economic downturn many young adults who've lost or can't find jobs are back home, and on the family budget.

President Obama's Affordable Care Act (passed earlier this year) extended dependent coverage to age 26 for private sector plans. But because the FEHBP is controlled by Congress, special legislation would have been required to change the 22-to-26 rule. Bills to that effect were introduced, but Congress has had other priorities (including lots of time off) and didn't get around to making the change for the federal program. But effective next year, all plans will be required to cover dependent children up to age 26.

Here are the changes effective in January, 2011:

Children, and stepchildren, whether living with the policy holder or not, will be covered under their parent's family FEHBP plan up to age 26, including married children, but not their spouses. Children who are eligible for and/or who have their own

employer-provided health coverage are also eligible for the FEHBP (as part of their parent's family plan) through age 26. If they keep their non-federal employer-provided health plan it will become the primary payer and FEHBP will be the secondary payer. Children incapable of supporting themselves because of a physical or mental disability that began before age 26 are eligible to continue coverage indefinitely. Foster children are also eligible for FEHBP coverage (under a family plan) to age 26.

The open enrollment benefits period for year 2011 coverage begins November 8 and runs through Dec. 13 of this year. That's when people can change plans for next year and/or add dependent children up to age 26 for coverage in 2011.

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