



NARFE Florida, Inc.

a federation serving all NARFE chapters in Florida



Volume 1 Issue 2

April, 2011

Fifty Ninth Annual Federation Conventions

The Fifty Ninth Federation Convention will take place between Tuesday, May 3, 2011 and Thursday, May 5, 2011 at the Hilton Hotel located in Altamonte Springs, Florida. It will start Tuesday at 10:00 am with two hours of training. Plan to come early for the first ever Recruitment and Retention Training. Ed Fleck will start with membership training followed by Jim Greene, Bob Lemley, and Paul Hartman. Paul Hartman will explain what he refers to as "Hot Buttons". This will be followed by a free lunch, compliments of the Federation.

Tuesday evening dinner will be followed by bingo. Try your hand at winning gift certificates. This event is very popular and the attendees seem to enjoy it.

Wednesday is the official opening of the convention. The morning will be spent with reports from various committees. After lunch we will finish up any reports and then nominations for the various officer positions. Caucus meetings will start at 4:00 pm. , Wednesday evening is Western Night and we will have Square Dancing. If you ever wanted to learn how to square dance, Wednesday is the time.

Thursday the polls will open at 7:00 am for voting. The Standing Committees will give their short reports. Federation will present awards. The formal installation Banquet will take place in the evening.

If you have never attended a Federation Convention before, now is the time. It may sound like fun and games but there is business we must attend to at this convention. There will be vendor tables plus Alzheimer's, FEEA, NARFE-PAC. Proxy votes may be carried by chapters attending for chapters that cannot attend.

Article published in Chapter 1137's March-April Newsletter

For 20 years NARFE has been able to prevent our earned annuity and health care benefits from being reduced. We gained many new members in the 1980s and 1990s following the Reagan Administration's cutting up to 75% of earned Social Security benefits from federal retirees along with local and state retirees. We have now seen our COLA removed, but Congress is talking about reducing our retirement and bringing back the top five years, instead of top three, for calculating retirement pay. Our presidents and elected officials have brought on this crisis, and now they want us to pay for it. Companies are still paid to export our jobs overseas; to allow other countries to violate our "free trade" agreements, to evaluate their money so that their products can be sold for less than U.S. products, and to allow the top several percent of our population (who determine the wages and salaries of the employed Americans) to give themselves million and billion a year salaries, almost tax free.

But we have the vote and must exercise it. In both our Congressional Districts 15 and 24, federal employees, retirees and their spouses have around ten percent of the total votes cast for Congressional candidates. If NARFE could get this message out to all of them, to vote only for the candidates who have in the past protected our earned benefits and new candidates who promise to protect them, together we could defeat any candidate who doesn't promise or hasn't protected our earned benefits. This is why we need to recruit as many new members as possible to increase our clout with Congress.

Charlie Shannon, D3VP

www.ProtectAmericasHeartbeat.org

America is in crisis. Our economy is only now coming out of the biggest recession since the Great Depression and our federal deficit is at a record high. These are serious problems and there is no question that all Americans must share the burden to bring this country back to fiscal health.

Like always, we will do our part. But we should not be deficit scapegoats.

Times are tough and patriotic federal workers and annuitants want to do their part, but not if it means we are singled out for budget cuts while others are not asked to make similar sacrifices. Of 45 proposals made by Fiscal Deficit Commission, the only one unilaterally embraced by the president has been a two-year federal pay freeze.

We can't let Washington politicians freeze pay, slash benefits and cut retirement annuities. That's why thousands of NARFE members from across the country have already taken action – sending letters to Congress, and sharing their story of federal service on our brand new website.

The website is only the first step in NARFE's national campaign to Protect America's Heartbeat. Soon we will be providing the tools, resources and materials for you to take action in your state and at your chapter.

Please take a moment now to do your part to protect America's heartbeat. Tell Congress not to cut your benefit's and let's fight together.

Joseph A. Beaudoin, President

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association.

NARFE Legislative Training Conference
March 5-8, 2011

Report

The overall theme for the Conference was "Federal Employees Protect America's Heartbeat." My husband, Bob, and I along with Scott and Kay Hedden from the Winter Haven Chapter 553 and Don Stewart, Region III Vice President were the Florida representatives. There were approximately 300 attendees from throughout the country including Puerto Rico. The conference was well planned and packed with information. If I were to relate all that was discussed my report would continue for many pages and still not do justice to the conference.

The conference started with a buffet dinner on Saturday evening. Bright and early Sunday morning we began in earnest. After the preliminaries we broke into five breakout sessions. They were NARFE-PAC, The U.S. Budget, Budget Cut Threats, Grassroots Organizing and Contacting Congress. I will try to summarize each of the sessions, as over the course of Sunday and Monday we were able to attend each of them. There will be a CD of the entire conference available in a couple of weeks and that will obviously give many more details. We even had speakers during lunch. It was impossible to make notes on those speeches. They were given by pro Federal employee/retiree Congresspersons or other pro fed speakers. The consensus of all of them was not a positive outlook for the federal sector.

The session on The U.S. Budget was presented by Alan Lopatin and Julie Tagen, both of whom have been on Congresspersons staffs and are now on the NARFE staff. This session explained the budget process.

The third session on Budget Cut Threats presented by Dan Adcock, NARFE Legislative Director, was probably the most disheartening. Mr. Adcock covered a multitude of threats to both our benefits and those of the current employee. These include the Fiscal Commission Recommendations, Threats beyond the Commission and Budget Enforcement. Included are a change in the way the CPI is calculated resulting in lower COLAs, using the High-5 Years of Salary to calculate pensions, increase employee contributions to the retirement fund and increase the percentage employees and retirees pay toward health insurance.

M & R Strategic Services, a company hired by our National Executive Board to enhance our image and assist us in our recruitment presented a session on Grassroots Organizing. This emphasizes the need to work from the lowest levels to recruit and maintain members as well as getting NARFE's name out to the public.

The final session on Contacting Congress was presented by Sarah Holstine of the Legislative Staff. This session concentrated on the necessity for contacting both Senators and Congresspersons. The recommendation is to contact them at least every 3 months or whenever requested to do so by National. The most effective means of contact is a personal visit. Handwritten letters are better than electronic messages.

There were two additional sessions for specific participants. One was for state legislative chairs to discuss what is happening in individual states in regards to taxing federal pensions and another for those of us living in what is termed targeted states/areas. Since we live in the 12th Congressional District and are on the Federation Board, Bob and I were asked to attend this meeting. The 12th District is targeted because Congressman Dennis Ross, our Representative, is chairman of the Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce, U.S. Postal Service and Labor Policy. We met with a representative from M & R to discuss what we in our area could do to let the Congressman know the feelings of the retirees/federal employees.

On Tuesday, the most of us had meetings with Senators and/or our Congressperson. Unfortunately, we were unable to meet with our Senators due to scheduling. However, Bob and I, along with the Heddens' and Don Stewart did meet with Charles Flint, Legislative Analyst for Congressman Ross. We shared information about NARFE and federal employees and retirees. While we were able to meet for about 45 minutes and were told the Congressman was a fair man who looks at all the facts with an open mind, we did not feel our visit was fruitful. We will, however, continue to keep in touch with Congressman Ross' office in Lakeland.

Over all it was a whirlwind conference that gave us much information. Unfortunately very few positive aspects for our benefits were forthcoming.

To display NARFE-PAC disbursements to candidates 2009-2010 by chamber:

<https://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/pacqot.php?cmte=C00091561&cycle=2010>

Help NARFE Grow

NARFE's total membership now stands at a staggering 302,464! Although we anticipated a dip in membership with the dues increase this year, these numbers point to a potentially damaging membership hemorrhage if not remedied now! NARFE cannot afford to have its numbers dip into the 200 thousands. To help us keep NARFE a viable association, we are calling on you, as a leader, to step up your efforts on our behalf.

Three Ways You Can Help NARFE Now!!

1. Contact every potential prospective member, listed in the M-112 report.
2. Contact every member who receives a second renewal notice, listed in the M-112 report.
3. Contact every member dropped for non-payment, also listed in the M-112 report.

Help us grow NARFE, so we may continue to fight for the hard-earned benefits of federal employees and retirees.

Elaine Hughes
National Secretary
rr@narfe.org

NARFE Legislative Training Conference

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The break out session on NARFE-PAC was presented by Chris Farrell, a member of the NARFE legislative staff. He explained the purpose of NARFE-PAC and gave us links to get additional information including who from our states received monies in 2010 and how much they received. I am sending those links to the NARFE FLORIDA, Inc. Executive Board and Appointed Officers.

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<https://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/pacgot.php?cmte>

It is with deep regret we announce that **National Treasurer Charles Saylor** has passed away.

The NEB has installed Richard Thissen, Region V RVP, to become the new Treasurer effective April 3, 2011. In the interim, Vice President Carew will be Acting Treasurer.

Thanks,
Linda Parsons
HR Director