



**Convention
Minutes NARFE
Florida, Inc.
Orlando
May 6 - 8, 2014**

The Annual Convention of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees (NARFE) Association State of Florida Federation known as NARFE Florida, Inc. (NFI) was held at the Rosen Centre in Orlando, Florida on May 6-8, 2014.

Tuesday May 6, 2014 – Opening Ceremonies

The Convention commenced at 5:25PM by President Kenneth J. Thomas, who greeted the attendees. He then turned the podium over to District 2 Vice President (DVP 2) Richard Carroll who introduced the Posting of Colors by the Lyman High School ROTC, Longwood, FL and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chaplain Father Vincent Pierino gave the invocation. President Thomas introduced Becky Silverstein who led in the singing of the National Anthem.

President Thomas then introduced the Convention Co-Chair Kent Pfremer. Mr. Pfremer welcomed all attendees and thanked everyone that was present at the convention. He stated that it has been a very joyful two days for he and his wife. "I want to thank everyone that has pitched in to help with the convention - especially Chapter 1224 for their assistance and we are very appreciative. We presently have 13 individuals that have not signed in. There are 175 attendees on hand and when we add the 13, we will have a total of 188 attendees for the convention. We had nine individuals that had to cancel due to medical reasons. I hope that you have a great convention and I encourage everyone to take advantage of the training programs that are being offered."

President Thomas then asked Executive Vice President (EVP) Jane Lemley to introduce the following distinguished guests:

- National Region III Vice President Donald E. Stewart
- Former Region III Vice President Bob Harrell and his wife Peggy – Region III Alzheimer's Chair
- Mississippi President Jerry Janci – candidate for Region II Vice President and his wife Margaret
- Mary Pierson – candidate for Region II Vice President and her husband Donald
- Marc Harris, President of the NFI E-Chapter 2364 – candidate for Region II Vice President

- Jon Dowie, member of NFI Chapter 0033 - candidate for National Treasurer, and his wife Donzella.

Since EVP Lemley was introducing candidates for national office, she also introduced President Thomas who is a candidate for National President.

President Thomas asked Secretary CarolJoy Reeves to call the roll of the executive board. The following elected officers were present:

President Kenneth J. Thomas
Executive Vice President Jane C. Lemley
Vice President William H. Leatham
Secretary CarolJoy Reeves
Treasurer Ruth W. Blackwell
District 1 Vice President Robert Shaw
District 2 Vice President Richard A. Carroll
District 3 Vice President B. Virginia Comella
District 4 Vice President Eleanor Aungst
District 5 Vice President Terry Zitek
District 6 Vice President Bruce C. Roggenkamp
District 7 was not represented.
District 8 Vice President Ronald Cibolski

President Thomas informed the convention members that NARFE National President Joseph Beaudoin was ill and unable to attend the convention. He then introduced the keynote speaker.” A man that does not really need an introduction. He travels the state on a regular basis and I have been fortunate to be on road trips with him. He has been my mentor over the years and has led this organization through trying times. This will be his last convention as our Region III Vice President (RVP III). Please welcome NARFE RVP III Donald Stewart.”

RVP III Stewart thanked NFI members for the support that was given him since 2003 when he started off as second vice president. “You have really supported me in my re-elections as Region III Vice President and I have a lot of good friends here. You have been caring and making sure that I have stayed the course. I thank you for that and I thank you for coming to this convention and it shows your support for the organization, our association and the importance of what it is that we do.”

He discussed the Future of NARFE (FON) Committee report which was presented to and accepted by the NARFE executive board (NEB) with minor changes and will be presented to NARFE members at the upcoming National Convention. “I urge you to ask the hard questions because they are necessary and helpful. I feel that what we have before us in this re-organization of NARFE is tantamount to climbing Mount Everest backwards.

It will be tough, very tough, because most of us do not like change, especially myself, but there is one thing that I recognize, whether I like it or not, that we have to see what is in the future – what is happening. This organization has not been prospering because we have stayed mired in the past.

I have not met all of the FON Committee members, but I know who they are and they are dedicated, honest people that did their best and have done something very difficult which is to put this organization on a business plan method of operation to help NARFE survive. I think we are in trouble and are facing an unfortunate, very unpleasant future if we do not do this.

Right now there is nothing in concrete. There are going to be changes that must go to the membership for approval. Look at their recommendations and proposals. Why are they doing this? They addressed the issue of money. We cannot continue as a dues-based organization. We have to find money outside of our membership - which is what all other fairly prosperous or successful organizations are doing. They have gone outside of their membership to get their money. This is one recommendation which was made by the FON Committee.

If approved, another proposal is reducing the number of the National officers from four to two. The regional vice presidents (my job) are being cut to five. It doesn't mean that we don't work, but this is an example of electronic technology advancing to the point that RVPs, in my humble opinion, have become irrelevant. We are supposed to transfer information. On numerous occasions, I have sent information to federation presidents only to find out that they already received the information the day before. I kind of resented that because I believe that if you have a structure chain of command, you should use it effectively. I think that the FON Committee has tried to address these issues. They may not be popular and you may not like the changes, but think in terms of the survival of this organization. That's what we are looking at. It is going to be a tough road to haul and it won't be something that we will be able to put in place tomorrow. Think in terms of being evolved. We have to give it a chance and we have to try. Mind you, if there is anyone that is skittish about this it is me. From my own point of view, I was really blessed when I decided to only run for two terms. I am a champion example of what is happening in that we are being taken over by technology. I do not like Twitter or Facebook, and I don't really like using email, but I try to look to find the positive in the changes. Maybe things have to be tweaked, but this is something that is extremely important – it is our future. Again, thank you for your support and for listening to me patiently. God bless you and have a great convention.”

President Thomas stated that he would like to take this opportunity to say a few things and to say thanks. He informed attendees that if they noticed, we are in a new facility and this is not the Hilton. He thanked Chair Robert Lemley and his Time, Place and Site Committee for doing an excellent job in selecting the Rosen Centre.

“I would also like to thank a person who in particular is the other part of my road trip team. Part of my road trips have been going all over this country since the middle of January last year. I have attended 7 conventions outside of the state and learned a lot

of different things about how conventions run – what works and what doesn't work; what we are doing and what we should be doing. I have seen quite a lot from executive board meetings from other states (Alabama and Georgia) and of course we have our own. I have learned a lot of different things as I have gone along the road. This other person sort of keeps me focused and this person has kept me sane very often when times have been rough. It is not easy being a Federation President. People think that it is a gravy train. I had one person asking me how much money I make. If I am making any, please let me know. I have been told in other states that this federation has stockpiled over \$175,000 stored away somewhere. We are lucky if we have \$75,000. I heard a lot of things about what we do. Some people do not like our leadership and complain about our electronic chapter that should have been terminated it a long time ago. I am not one of those advocates. This other person has kept me going. About a week ago, this person had the pleasure of travelling 1,038 miles without stopping back from the Ohio convention. I arrived home in time to turn around and drive another 85 miles to make another speech. I would like to thank my wife, Arlette.

The people who have arranged this convention, our convention co-chairs, this is not their first rodeo and probably will not be their last. Back in July, NFI had the pleasure of hosting the NEB Federation Presidents Meeting. There was roughly a group of about 13 to 15 people within the federation that actually did a phenomenal job of pulling off one of the most impossible tasks you could possibly imagine and produced one of the best Federation President meetings that we have ever had. For those committee members, I would like to say special thanks. One of the key people that were part of this are our Convention Co-chairs Kent and Marge Pfremer and they will also be working as our convention co-chair coordinators for the National convention. One of the most remarkable parts of the meeting was the training that was involved for the federation presidents. Our training officers, Dr. Juanita Sue Stein and Roland Moore did an absolutely phenomenal job of arranging not only for the people to conduct the training, but they also ensured that the training programs met the needs of the federation presidents. We received positive feedback from all but one of the 54 federation presidents for the outstanding training programs.

Our convention has a unique person that has done an outstanding job compiling and organizing what we call "The Book" (Convention Program Book). If I was getting paid, you could not pay me enough to do "The Book". This person somehow gets up every morning and puts together "The Book" for this convention. I would like to thank her for her years of service to this organization for doing that work. That person is Gwen Harvey.

Another unsung hero that has graced our presence and is short of phenomenal is a person who retired from what used to be the general accounting office. She has testified before congressional committees and she essentially audits what we do not only for the federation, but for individual chapters. What we have done over the past two years is to rescue chapters. We run around the state and actually rescue chapters, but before we do, we always try to find out what has been going on financially within the chapter. She personally reviews the books and finds out what their treasury looks like and what they

were spending. And we found out some interesting things that they were spending their treasury on - things that they essentially should not have been spending money on, i.e. clothing, gifts for themselves and meals for themselves. Folks, this is not your money. Those things can not and will not be tolerated by me or anyone else. We have bylaws to protect us and this particular person identified areas of concern and we were able to stop some things that should not have been happening. We were able to correct it, and I would like to thank Linda Harmon for the work that she is doing.

I would not be able to do the job that I do as federation president without my executive board. My executive board is probably one of the best executive boards anybody could have. Believe me that this is one executive board that if it is twelve o'clock midnight or six o'clock in the morning we are on the phone. We are on the computer and we are doing things to keep this organization out in front. So without my executive board and district vice presidents (DVPs), the executive board that you see sitting up here are people, whether you believe it or not, who put in hundreds of hours each week. Like I stated earlier, if anyone thinks that this job is a piece of cake, it is not. If I am not spending more than 60 or 80 hours a week on NARFE business then I don't feel like I have done a very good job and there is a lot that has to be done. So, I want to thank my executive board for all that they have done. They have done a remarkable job during my tenure and I want to thank them.

Over the next few days, there will be more training programs. One of the things we found out two years ago was that we were not offering enough meat and potatoes. People were walking away from the convention saying that 'Every time we come to one of these things we don't get anything out of it. We don't take anything back to our chapters and we don't take anything back that we can use and quite frankly we are upset about it.' So last year we had 21 training programs and this year we are offering two additional training programs. We believe that the training and the more information that you get, the better you will be able to do what you do as a NARFE member.

As RVP III Stewart stated, there will be some controversial things from the future changes recommended by the FON Committee. The committee issued a report back in February and it was reviewed by the NEB and then sent out to the members and fireworks started immediately. There was a lot of push back and there was a lot of positive and negative responses. When we come back here for the National Convention on August 24 to 28, there will be and I guarantee that we will see a lot of indoor fireworks in these rooms because there are a lot of people that have a dog in this fight so to speak. The one thing though that unifies us is that we all want this organization to survive. It has survived since 1921, and the reason why it survives is because of our loyal members like you who are the people that have held it together and you need to give yourselves a hand right now for all of your efforts.

Tomorrow morning at 9:00AM, this meeting will be called to order and until then we will stand in recess. As a reminder, dinner will be at 7:00PM and unfortunately, Mr. Beaudoin will not be present for the question and answer period, but if someone wants to ask a question, we have many people here to answer some questions. I want to

thank you for coming and I want to thank you for coming to this new facility. Quite frankly, I didn't think that we would have more than a hundred members here because we are also responsible for the national convention, but thank goodness you have proved me wrong. Thank you very much."

The opening ceremonies concluded at 6:15PM.

Wednesday May 7, 2014 – Official Business Session

Call to Order. President Thomas convened the convention at 9:09AM. DVP 2 Carroll gave the invocation and President Thomas led the Pledge of Allegiance. President Thomas gave opening remarks and he recognized Lloyd Pearson for his support.

Credentials Preliminary Report. Chair Marjorie Pfremmer referenced the tables on page 5 of convention program book.

Authorized Voting Strength

Delegates - 538
Executive Board Members - 13
Past Presidents - 7
Total Authorized Voting Strength - 558

Voting Strength Represented at 2014 Convention

Delegates - 425
Proxies – 16
Executive Board Members – 12.
Past Presidents - 1
Total Voting Strength Present at Convention - 454

Membership Present at Convention

Executive Board Members – 12
Past Presidents - 1
Other Delegates - 142
Guests - 14
Total Attending 2014 Convention – 169

EVP Lemley explained that for the first time, the Credentials Committee reported the voting strength of chapters represented at the 2014 Convention as compared to the overall authorized voting strength of NFI. Based on the 2013 revision to NFI bylaws, "Alternates" are no longer counted. At the next convention, the report of the Credentials Committee will be revised to show these two categories of voting possibilities. The chart in the convention program book will be revised next year. Following these clarifications, the report was adopted.

Rules Committee Report. Standing Rules for the 2014 Convention were distributed and reviewed by delegates. In Rule 4, the red card replaced the orange card which were worn and were discarded. In Rule 3, the statements “and alternates” and “(Alternates do not vote.)” were removed. Only delegates and visitors attend official conventions of NFI, thus the term “alternates delegates” is inappropriate. In Rule 8, the two sentences “Nominating speeches from the floor shall be limited to three minutes. No more than two additional speeches shall be permitted for each candidate, and shall be limited to two minutes each.” were deleted in order to conform with Article VII in the 2013 revision to the NFI bylaws. The Standing Rules were adopted as distributed with the changes above.

Convention Agenda. Reference pages 10 – 14 of the convention program book. There being no objections, the agenda was adopted as printed, subject to adjustments as needed.

Reading of the 2013 Convention Minutes. Reference pages 75 – 96 of the convention program book. There being no corrections, the minutes were approved.

Reading of Communications and Correspondence. Secretary Reeves reported that there were no communications or correspondence regarding the convention to read.

RVP III Stewart addressed the assembly. In his comments, he led in congratulations to Gwen Harvey for preparing the convention program book and to the Convention Committee for their efforts in this year’s convention. He expressed his appreciation for the support of the Florida federation and the region. RVP III Stewart will be stepping down from this elected position as of November 1, 2014.

NFI Officers’ Reports.

President’s Report. President Thomas gave details of some of the things that were accomplishments in the past year, beginning with the executive board meeting following the 2013 NFI Convention and through the end April 2014 and into this convention. “These are highlights as my report is three pages long.”

Attended several NEB meetings and attended leadership training seminars for Region III and Region VI. Region VI (Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas) has an excellent leadership training seminar, as does Don Stewart. It was interesting to see a different group and how they approach issues that are related to NARFE.

Attended Alabama, Georgia and our own executive board meetings. Coordinated the hosting of the NARFE NEB and Federation Presidents Meeting in July 2013, with a committee of 13 to 15 members, which was consistently recognized across the country as one of the best NEB and federation presidents meeting that they have ever had.

Assisted in site visits for pending National conventions. I was sort of adopted by the NEB committee that goes around to do site selections. One of the issues that has never been addressed in the past is what technology can we use to enhance the meetings. So the requests for proposal that had been sent out in the past have never addressed this issue. So this was one of the issues that was addressed in several of the site visits in the southern quadrant of the United States.

Installed officers in 14 NFI chapters. Visited 34 chapters throughout the state and some more than once for a total of about 70 visits for issues and answers.

Participated in eight national and regional teleconferences.

Coordinated the continuation of GoToMeeting and GoToWebinar technology across our state. VP Leatham was commended for all the work he does in setting up these meetings. These have been opened up not only to NFI members but also to federations in other states and National. VP Leatham is presently working with Georgia federation to help them set up GoToMeeting and GoToWebinar technology. Before President Thomas was elected, the executive board would meet at a central location. And coming to that central location each time cost anywhere from \$5,000 to \$7,000 just to hold a meeting that lasted a day and a half. So to save money, we now have electronic executive board meetings which are also available for members to log onto to hear the discussions that are going on and the decisions that are being made. These are meetings that we do not have to pay for, so we are saving the federation thousands of dollars. This past year alone there were five executive board meetings, saving from \$25,000 to \$40,000. His philosophy is that NARFE is a business and not a social organization.

Coordinated financial audits of four NFI chapters, the Alzheimer's fund, the 2013 convention and the federation. Linda Harmon is our auditor and has done an excellent job for us.

Provided numerous articles for the NFI newsletter. Provided numerous letters to the editor for statewide publications of which two were published in the Tampa Bay Times.

Appointed the chairpersons of the convention non-standing committees.

Several initiatives that are in progress include chapters in need of attention, recruitment, retention and reinstatement of members and marketing chapters. Along with the EVP, ensured that chapters followed procedures when chapter closing was considered, such as informing all chapter members. Implemented a retention committee to meet with chapters in need of attention and succession planning to keep chapters growing. Thanks to the retention committee, in the last two years only one chapter was closed and 14 were rescued. There are still six or eight on the waiting list for the committee to get to them. The one chapter that was closed was University Village in Tampa, an assisted living facility that was established years ago and whose members were no longer holding meetings because its officers and members no longer could. For

chapters in need of attention, we're asking the treasurer to pay all the bills, close the checking account and to send the treasury of the chapter up to the National office for protection of funds in escrow. One chapter that attempted to close and the treasurer died, that person was the only signature authority on that checking account. When a family member of the treasurer attempted to cash a large check at the bank of the NARFE account, fortunately the bank contacted a member of the chapter and federation President who confirmed that the check should not be cashed. Another chapter's treasurer had moved out of state with the check book and was since deceased. These are things that can and do happen. So we ask that there be at least two people to have signature authorized on chapter bank accounts.

Maintained three blogs (electronic messages) including On Your Radar, What's Brewing and Tidbits. Sent 1,102 NARFE related emails to DVPs, chapter presidents and members. President Thomas stressed he believes in communication on NARFE issues and that members need to know what is going on to make informed decisions. "We are the low hanging fruit. We are what Congress targets. They are after our benefits, to cut those benefits. NARFE is an organization that is there to protect those benefits. So you must quickly respond to your Congressman. Florida is the fifth largest state as far as NARFE membership, but we are number two in responses behind California. We are being proactive and that is what's going to save us. Members of Congress and their staff are watching the number of negative tweets and negative comments they are receiving from their constituency. It is important that we address and stop whatever it is that they are doing. Communications has changed for all of us dramatically.

As your federation president, it has been a pleasure being the president, working with you and meeting with you at your chapter and district meetings. I thank you very much for giving me the ability to serve you."

Executive Vice President's Report. EVP Lemley stated "It's a pleasure to be here today. I told you last year it was a busy year. Well, I didn't know anything about the meaning of busy."

Attended many chapter meetings throughout the state including at least one in each district and in some cases four in the panhandle. Attended several anniversary parties and a noon time cruise.

Sent untold emails to the DVPs, answered numerous email and phone questions from DVPs, chapter presidents and members. Answered questions by email and phone as soon as possible or let them know research would be needed and the answer would be later.

Made presentations at all eight district meetings. Participated in a number of Webinars, GoToMeetings and conference calls both within NARFE Florida and with Headquarters. Also attended the Region III Leadership Training Conference last fall in Georgia along with a number of members from Florida.

Worked with President Thomas on this convention, the Federation President's Meeting held at the Rosen Centre in July 2013, and the plans for the National Convention to be held at the Rosen Centre in August 2014. Also worked very closely with convention co-chairs with the plans for this convention.

As oversight officer for the DVPs, the training officers and retention and recruitment chairs, EVP Lemley was kept on her toes. Worked with the training officers who have been very busy making arrangements for the training classes and presentations being held at the convention this week. Since neither the retention nor recruitment chairs were able to continue in those capacities, covered those positions as well as scheduling and attending Senior Fests and other events and working with chapters needing assistance.

Vice President Leatham. "This has been a busy year for me also. Obtained \$10,000 in price reductions for audio visual and information technology services here at the Rosen Centre. Friends at National headquarters who sign the contracts for the National convention really helped NFI. When the Rosen Centre realized that we are all one family, the price dropped by two thirds.

Served on the FON Committee which was a challenging and hardworking assignment.

Served on the Configuration Advisory Board that manages OAMS.

Acting Webmaster and Acting Newsletter Editor.

Manage GoToMeeting and GoToWebinar for NFI.

Assisted the NEB and Federation Presidents Meeting at this site last July, helping their IT folks and giving a presentation.

We are in the process of switching our electronic newsletter to another vendor. There have been overcharges from the current vendor and it has been very unpleasant. The new vendor should begin in June when that contract is set up and goes into effect."

Secretary's Report. Secretary Reeves reported that she attended and recorded the minutes for five executive board meetings during the past year. Copies are in the convention program book. She thanked everyone for attending the convention and for their support of NARFE.

Treasurer's Report. Report of Treasurer Blackwell is at pages 56 - 57 of the convention program book. She put together the per capita voting strength report for the convention from the OAM and found only 72 chapters, but with help from VP Leatham the four missing were found for a total of 76 chapters.

She reminded chapters to submit their Form 990N in a timely manner to the IRS. The penalty for late submissions is \$400 for that chapter. She has the EINs which are the numbers chapters need. She stated that for now, "we are under the umbrella."

She sent out the monthly reports for the executive board, the balances of assets, and monthly budget information of funds in and out. Convention treasurer since 2003 and the Treasurer since 2007.

NFI is a 501c(5) organization and pays taxes to the state.

In the program book are the balances as of March 31, 2014 of all accounts totaling \$90,279.18. Not reflected in this amount is the convention account and right now the balance in that account is \$13,527.42.

Audit Reports. Reference pages 58 – 63 of the convention program book for audit reports of the NFI general operations account, the NFI convention account and the Alzheimer's account. There being no objections, the Audit Reports were adopted as printed.

Nominations of Executive Officers. President Thomas called for nominations for 2014-2015 Executive Officers of NFI. President Thomas directed Secretary Reeves to present the names of nominees:

Chapter 1224 nominated Jane Lemley for the office of President.
Chapter 0109 nominated Terry Zitek for the office of Executive Vice President.
Chapter 0717 nominated William Leatham for the office of Vice President.
Chapter 0172 nominated Pamela Busch for the office of Secretary.
Chapter 1224 nominated Patricia Staley for the office of Treasurer.
No other nominations were received by Secretary Reeves.

President Thomas stated that according to the NFI bylaws, nominations may only be made from the floor for an office for which the Secretary received no nomination from a member chapter. Therefore, nominations from the floor were not permitted. The bylaws provide that where there is only one candidate nominated, the President shall declare that the candidate is elected. President Thomas declared each of the above nominees elected to the office for which they were nominated.

Speeches from Candidates for NARFE National Offices. President Thomas permitted the following candidates for National office to speak for five minutes each:

Mary Pierson, candidate for NARFE Region II Vice President.
Marc Harris, candidate for NARFE Region II Vice President
Jerry Janci, candidate for NARFE Region II Vice President
Jon Dowie, candidate for NARFE National Treasurer
Ken Thomas, candidate for NARFE National President

General Resolutions. Committee Chair Patricia Vevera referenced pages 69-70 of the convention program book. Chapter 717 proposed that no convention be held during the year 2016. Article VI, Section 1a of the bylaws states that conventions shall be held at

regular intervals but no longer than every two years. There are concerns because of dramatic changes proposed by the FON Committee that are being considered by the NEB and will be voted on at the 2014 NARFE National Convention in August. And the cost of holding a state convention is a definite issue. These were the rationale of the committee in considering the resolution.

The committee proposed the following resolution: “that NARFE Florida, Inc. shall not hold a convention during the year 2016. The Committee also proposed that the remainder of the resolution proposed by Chapter 717 be removed.”

Motion 01: Jim Hardy (086) moved that the language of the resolution be changed by striking out “, and that the convention subsequent to the 2015 convention shall be held commencing May 9, 2017 at the place selected by the NARFE Florida, Inc. 2015 Convention.” Motion was properly seconded and on voice vote, the resolution was amended.

President Thomas called for debate on the amended resolution “BE IT RESOLVED: that NARFE Florida, Inc. shall not hold a convention during the year 2016.”

Motion 02: Marc Harris (2364) moved that the amended resolution be adopted. Motion was properly seconded and on hand vote, the resolution was adopted. President Thomas excused the General Resolutions Committee.

Announcements. EVP Lemley gave the locations for District Caucuses held for DVPs to report to their districts and to hold elections for the elected office of DVP for the coming year 2014-2015.

President Thomas placed the convention to recess at 11:30AM until the next session on Thursday, May 8, 2014

Thursday, May 8, 2014 – Official Business Session (continued)

President Thomas reconvened the convention at 9:05AM.

Results of District Caucus Elections. President Thomas recognized Secretary Reeves who read the results of elections in the district caucuses:

- District 1 - Robert Shaw unopposed
- District 2 - Richard Carroll unopposed
- District 3 - Bernice (Virginia) Comella unopposed
- District 4 - Eleanor L. Aungst unopposed
- District 5 - Roland Moore elected
- District 6 - Felicia Bradley elected
- District 7 - Kay Frances Wardrope elected
- District 8 - Ronald C. Cibolski unopposed

Secretary Reeves cast a unanimous vote for DVPs who were unopposed.

Chaplain Father Vincent Pierino presented the invocation, followed by DVP 2 Carroll who led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Credentials Final Report. President Thomas recognized Convention Credentials Committee Chair Marjorie Pfremmer who gave the committee's final report of voting strength and delegate count:

Voting Strength Represented at 2014 Convention

Delegates - 425

Proxies – 16

Executive Board Members – 12.

Past Presidents - 1

Total Voting Strength Present at Convention - 454

Membership Present at Convention

Executive Board Members – 12

Past Presidents - 1

Other Delegates - 149

Guests - 14

Total Attending 2014 Convention – 176

The final report of the credential's committee was adopted.

Bylaws Committee. President Thomas recognized the Bylaws Committee Chair Terry Zitek who introduced and thanked his committee. He reported that this year there were no bylaw amendments received and therefore no committee business was required. President Thomas dismissed the Committee and thanked the Bylaw Committee for the major work that was done last year to bring the bylaws into compliance.

Alzheimer's Research. President Thomas recognized Region III Alzheimer's Chair Peggy Harrell who reported that over 5 million Americans are afflicted with Alzheimer's disease, 200,000 of which are under the age of 65, one in nine are over 65, and one in three are over 85 years old. Diagnosis of this disease is normally between 70-80 years of age. To date, our NARFE members have contributed \$10,790,909, just short of our \$11 million goal, and Region III is third this year in contributions. Peggy Harrell discussed research alliances and collaborations which have been formed, but to date, there is still not a definitive cause or cure for the disease. She thanked Pat Staley for her efforts and work in Florida as its Alzheimer's Coordinator. President Thomas thanked Peggy for her report and informed the attendees that the Harrell's are part of the NFI family.

President Thomas announced that the food in the hospitality suite is sponsored by United Health Care and Florida Blue. He urged everyone to visit with the vendors and to bid on the silent auction items donated by them.

President Thomas announced that the National Convention will take place at the Rosen Center from August 24-28, 2014. Florida, as the host state, will be providing 45 volunteers to assist in running the convention, which is expected to have 1,500 to 2,000 attendees. National has agreed to pay each volunteer \$50 per day, up to a maximum of \$150, for this work. Training prior to the 24th will be scheduled and required. Anyone who is interested needs to sign up and will be notified, if selected. He reminded the convention that the Alzheimer's Fund is still accepting donations.

President Thomas recognized Sylvia Ventura and congratulated her on her birthday and thanked both John and Sylvia Ventura for their many years of service to the Florida Federation and at conventions. He urged everyone to fill out and submit the convention evaluation forms.

2015 Alzheimer's Cruise. President Thomas recognized Phyllis Bernstein who talked about the 2015 Alzheimer's Benefit Cruise, which will sail from Miami on January 17, 2015 on the new ship MSC Divina. All proceeds will go either to the Alzheimer's fund or back to the passenger. A \$35 per person up-front charitable donation to NFI Alzheimer's Fund is pre-requisite for a reservation, which will be refunded in the form of up to a \$75 per cabin on board credit. The cruise is 100% non-smoking, including the balcony. So far, 35 people have signed up. Prices, which include all surcharges and port fees, but exclude the \$35 up-front fee and insurance, are listed on Page 133 of the Convention Program Book.

Future of NARFE (FON). President Thomas introduced this topic by saying that the future of NARFE is being discussed all over the country. He offered that this is important because NARFE is in a tailspin; we are having significant problems from which we may not recover if we continue on the path we are on; we are in an unsustainable position and change must occur. He said that initially the FON Committee proposed 35 recommendations and suggestions, some of which he does not agree with, but agrees that change must occur. He said that the upcoming national convention may be the most important convention since the first one which took place 32 years ago. He urged everyone to attend.

President Thomas introduced VP Leatham who is a member of the FON Committee. He stated that after VP Leatham's report, attendees would be given a maximum of two minutes each for their questions and comments.

VP Leatham reported that the FON Committee was created in July of 2013 by the NEB and set into motion in August 2013. Its purpose is to ensure that NARFE has a future. The GEMS announcement was blunt, "The FON Committee was established because the organization is unsustainable and that the long established mission is in grave danger."

The ten members of FON Committee included Chapter Presidents, RVPs, and Federation Presidents representing the entire United States. He added, it is hard to believe that such a diverse group could agree so quickly, perhaps because of the pronouncement by National Treasurer Dick Thissen that NARFE will be gone by 2020 without major reforms, followed by the statement that we will run out of money by 2020 if we continue to do business the way we have. All of this is coupled with the FON Committee's finding that only 20% of our revenue goes to our mission (only \$2.2 million of the \$11 million revenue) with the other 80% eaten up by our structure, our unique dependence on dues' income, and our organization structure. The FON Committee proposed suggestions and recommendations are about more than money and include effective coordination and organization.

VP Leatham reminded the attendees that without the NARFE organization there will be no chapters, no liability insurance, no group tax exemption, and no direct deposits. It will be impossible to keep a Chapter afloat without National, and the Federations will have higher overheads and no dues of their own.

He stated that the mission of the FON Committee is to do whatever it takes to save NARFE, and that is your mission. We don't like change, we fear it, but it is survival vs. extinction.

The FON Committee led by Co-Chairs Past Virginia Federation President Bill Shackelford and Regional Vice President Evelyn Kirby were good choices and leaders. Long time Palomar Chapter President Robert "Old Bob" Davidson and Marc Harris worked well in tandem. The committee came up with a complete package, which like a course of medication, needs to be completed in full. If we stop in the middle, we are worse off than when we started, dead. Times have changed, and so must we. The FON Committee made 35 recommendations, all based on our financial and organizational situation, which the NEB endorsed unanimously.

The first resolution is in effect: Our ten regions have been reconfigured to five. The next two are convention resolutions you will be voting on relating to 1) decrease the National Resident Officers from four to two, and 2) eliminate Mandatory Chapter Membership. National has had to back off on some other recommendations regarding membership based on legal opinions.

The FON Committee recommendations include hiring of an executive director and professional marketing staff, and appointing outside directors who would bring name recognition and management expertise. A new NARFE would focus on Congressional Districts. The efficiencies from this streamlining will fuel recruitment, retention, legislation and service improvements with millions of dollars saved.

In closing, VP Leatham asked for the attendees support implementing the recommendation of FON Committee to save NARFE. He called for questions.

Bob Shaughnessy (1557) asked what other revenue sources besides dues were you considering. VP Leatham replied by expanded membership, affiliate dues, conferences, and sponsorship.

Marilyn Hollowood (1414) said she endorses chapter membership and that it seems to her that the FON Committee was not encouraging chapter membership. VP Leatham expressed his personal like for the traditional chapters, but pointed out that since mandatory membership went into effect, we have experienced a decline in membership, rather than an increase. This was reported by Lloyd Pearson in 1986. VP Leatham added that NARFE has four virtual chapters, with eNARFE being two of them, and all four have one thing in common: they have all grown, while the traditional chapters have not. The hope is that when these non-traditional chapter members rub elbows with traditional chapter members, it will entice them into traditional chapter membership.

Mary Pierson (0209, Biloxi, MS) spoke in favor of the FON Committee recommendations, saying that she would like to open up NARFE to the military. VP Leatham answered that the FON Committee endorses this.

Don Stewart (1405) expressed his support of the chapter membership concept; however, he reminded the assembly that the membership decline followed when mandatory membership was implemented. He doesn't think that removing mandatory chapter membership will cause NARFE's decline. VP Leatham said that when he did some analysis some years back, he discovered there were people who were chapter shopping based on chapter dues.

Marc Harris (2364) stated that FON Committee considered input from people who were not on the committee and that it was obvious to everyone that mandatory chapter membership is a problem and must be changed. It was agreed, if you want to keep your traditional chapters, go ahead. E-Chapters give people an option. NARFE leadership will come from congressional teams or groups.

Eleanor Aungst (160) asked about where the resource pool would come from for the congressional district leaders. VP Leatham offered that the resource pool would come from inside our chapters, from mega districts and from both traditional and non-traditional chapters, including NARFE members who live in other states but belong to Florida chapters.

Steven Shoub (717) stated we don't agree on everything, but we do support the goal of the FON Committee. He stated that mandatory chapter membership should not be eliminated and that it could have worked if we had unified dues. He felt chapters should support new organizational structure with unified dues and legislative direction. He

doesn't feel that we need to kill chapters to accomplish the mission. VP Leatham stated that he and Steve worked together before the Grand Rapids convention on a unified chapter dues resolution which did not make it to the floor.

Tony Torchia (1552) expressed his hope that everyone had read the outstanding 26 page FON Committee report and recommends we follow its guidelines. He feels that from the chapter perspective, we may be on the verge of demise before 2020. He offered that in the past we had other plans offered, but feels that the FON Committee recommendations are more comprehensive. He urged, don't worry about chapters, they need not go away, but it is up to the membership.

Virginia Comella (817) questioned where we would identify, select, and recruit the 26 congressional district leaders. VP Leatham replied every person resident in a congressional district would participate in the selection of its congressional district leader and the pool would come from the 76 chapters and 30 active people at the Federation level.

Jim Hardy (086) stated he was not for or against the FON Committee recommendations, but commends the committee for its efforts. We are facing a culture change, like other organizations. We now have instant communications. He added, we are not a business. VP Leatham added that we are not in business to make money; but we are in business to keep the organization running.

Felicia Bradley (1140) stated she would support eliminating mandatory chapter membership. She said we are a business, not one to make money, but to keep the benefits we earned and were promised. She thought it was good to have chapters, but felt that chapter membership would not decline when membership is not mandatory.

Terry Zitek (109) asked for clarification on abolishing mandatory chapter membership but having mandatory membership in a congressional district. VP Leatham explained you are not a mandatory member of a congressional district, but just happen to reside there. He offered that the congressional district leader would serve as a leader for advocacy, service, and possible chapter assistance to the traditional chapter. Congressional district leaders would have an honorarium and expense account. Terry Zitek asked if it is the view of FON Committee that the bureaucratic structure they are proposing is superior to the Federation structure and would support the chapters. VP Leatham replied yes, because it is more focused on the mission, which would include the traditional chapter, and would be more cost effective because it would not have the overhead of the Federation that exists now. Terry Zitek asked if it is FON Committee's expectation that the congressional district leaders would organize a convention, and VP Leatham replied that the view was to hold a conference that would be a source of revenue. With respect to recruitment, Terry Zitek asked, does the FON Committee expect to get a substantial number of new members by opening up the membership to individuals under age of 26? VP Leatham responded that they were hoping to get a

significant number of people who would buy into the mission and provide support. Other organizations get a significant amount of money from junior members. Don Stewart interjected that this recommendation for a membership category for individuals under the age of 26 had been withdrawn.

Don Stewart (1405) suggested that if anyone had questions about the FON Committee report and its recommendations, they submit them to him and he will bring them up for discussion at the June 9-12 national executive board meeting.

Rita Smith (109) stated that FERS retirees cannot afford NARFE. The organization has to change because these retirees represent the pool NARFE will be drawing from. The question is whether NARFE will be a bottoms up or top down organization. In response, VP Leatham asked what are you willing to pay for a NARFE membership? If we keep the same structure, we will need a dues increase that will be astronomical. He reminded attendees that only 20% of our dues go to support the organization, and 80% of our dues go to support NARFE's infrastructure. He reviewed the national office management structure and their responsibilities.

Evelyn Seabrook (662) asked if she understood correctly that for those members choosing non-chapter affiliation, the national office will not send any of their dues to the local chapters. She asked if this money would be used to hire more legislative advocacy for our issues. VP Leatham replied that the idea is that the savings from a new infrastructure will provide resources for more advocacy of our mission.

Ferdinand Juluke (172) commended the FON Committee and its cross-section of the membership. He feels congressional districts help us and feels the concept will work very well for NARFE. Some of components that will help us are used by NAACP. We also have to think about active employees prior to retirement so that they know the value of NARFE. VP Leatham offered that it is important to offer pre-retirement seminars similar to the ones developed and presented by Terry Zitek in District 5.

Jim Hardy (086) raised a point of order that Standing Rule 6 states that no delegate shall speak more than once on the same question. Parliamentarian Tim Wynn informed Rule 6 does not apply because the delegates are just asking questions regarding the FON Committee in reference to its recommendations.

Marc Harris (2364) responded to Terry Zitek's question on whether we expect to get a substantial number of members under the age 26, to which he added he didn't think so, but that it was introduced because it would mean additional members and a source of revenue not previously tapped. It would also be a good way to get people to understand what we do and it would be a good public relations step. The suggestion is that we open up membership and the only reason it was taken off the agenda was a legal one because it might violate 501c(5) of the Internal Revenue Code and we could lose our tax status.

Lloyd Pearson (172) reiterated that mandatory membership was a mistake and provided the historical membership statistics to support this.

Dorothy Willis (662) raised several questions regarding sale of the NARFE building and whether the staff needed daily access to Capitol Hill. She was concerned about chapter liability insurance, and felt we were not a business but a union with dues and that congressional districts are political. VP Leatham confirmed that the NARFE building does not meet current building codes and the FON Committee had discussions on where do people need to be. He stated that other than legislative people and possibly the National President, there is no need for people to be close to Washington, DC. He emphasized, we are political, but non-partisan, and we are here to lobby for our benefits.

Robert Flynn (160) felt that the impression from the podium and the assembly is that the Chapters will be left to wither in the wind. He questions where the Chapter service officer will be recruited from and get their support. This is a question that FON Committee needs to answer. VP Leatham replied it is not the FON Committee's desire to have Chapters wither away, that many of the suggestions of FON Committee came from a long-time California chapter president, and that the hope is that the congressional district leaders will be able to identify people who will be able to serve as service officers.

President Thomas thanked VP Leatham and all who have participated in questions and answers. He acknowledged first time NFI convention attendees, reviewed the revised training schedule, and thanked the people who assisted in the Bylaws training seminar and said that Parliamentarian Tim Wynn had hand-outs available.

Presentation of Contest Awards by Exhibitors. Florida Blue Eddie Williams and Liz Peralta presented five refrigerated rolling cases and three backpacks to the following eight drawing winners: Bob Shaw (1305), Bruce Roggenkamp (845), Diana Leatham (717), Leslie Braverman (242), Judy Potter (2040), Mel Vevera (2247), Bob Miller (1002), and Pamela Busch (172).

Ms. Peralta reminded everyone that OPM open season for health insurance enrollment starts in October and if anyone need to schedule Florida Blue for a district meeting, make sure to give the details to your Florida Blue representative. VP Leatham announced that in October there will be a Florida Blue Webinar and urged everyone to sign up when the date and time is published. From what he understands, there will be significant changes that everyone will want to know about before year-end.

President Thomas recognized GEHA and United Health Care. He said they had donated several items for a silent auction.

Pat Staley presented prizes for the Alzheimer's drawing, which went to Richard Taylor (753), Judy Grier (1224), Rueben Plachy (2023) and Margaret Janci. The 50/50 drawing, in the amount of \$160.00, was won by Brain Conger (0095).

Federation Awards: President Thomas presented presidential citations for Convention and Conference Facilitators to Roland Moore, Dr. Juanita Sue Stein, and to Marjorie and Kent Pfremmer.

The Woman of the Year award was presented to Gwen Harvey (033). The Man of the Year award was presented to Greg A. D'Alessio (033).

Pat Staley awarded Alzheimer's Certificates of Appreciation to the Englewood/Venice Chapter (717) for their \$1,257 contribution; the Columbia County Chapter (1548) for their \$1,500 contribution, and to the Strawberry-Plant City Chapter (1224) for their \$2,046 contribution.

President Thomas announced that photos of the convention are available on disc from photographers Stanley and Joanna Frazier for \$10 per disk, and the money is due with your order.

New Business. (none)

Good of the Federation (delegates). None

Announcements. Secretary Reeves reminded everyone that the banquet would start promptly at 6PM. For those people who were in the Bylaws training seminar, Parliamentarian Tim Wynn has handouts available. Pamela Busch requested the training handouts be posted to the Florida website. Mr. Thomas announced that the originally scheduled banquet keynote speaker, National President Joe Beaudoin, will not be present due to his illness, but that RVP III Stewart will swear in the new officers and address the audience. In addition, there would be musical entertainment.

Closing Remarks. Mr. Thomas thanked everyone for their support during his two years as Federation President. Chaplain Father Vincent Pierino gave the benediction.

President Thomas asked if there were any objections to the Executive Committee approving the Minutes of the Convention. Hearing none, the Minutes were approved.

Terry Zitek (109) reminded that President Thomas agreed to read National Treasurer Dick Thissen's candidate statement for National President. President Thomas said he would read it at the banquet.

President Thomas asked if there were any objections to the convention being adjourned. Hearing none, the convention adjourned at 11:45AM.

Thursday May 8, 2014 - Closing Ceremonies

Installation of Officers Banquet was held at 6:00PM. A memorial service was conducted by Chaplain Father Vincent Pierino. President Thomas read candidate Dick Thissen's statement for the office of National President. Following the formal installation of officers, door prizes, raffle prizes and a grand prize were awarded. The benediction was given by Chaplain Father Vincent Pierino.

Respectfully submitted,

CarolJoy Reeves

CarolJoy Reeves
NFI Secretary

Approved,

Pamela Busch

Pamela Busch
Chair, 2014 NFI Convention
Minutes Committee