



**Sunflower Chapter 1160  
Kansas City, KS  
Byron Nichols, Editor**

**MAY MEETING:  
11:00 A.M., Friday, 05/14/10**

**JUNE MEETING:  
11:00 A.M., Friday, 06/11/10**

**Both at the Pat Hanlon Senior Center,  
1101 Ridge Ave., Kansas City, KS**

Chapter Officers		
President	E. Regina Barger	913-342-8256
Vice-President	LaVerne Robinson	913-371-7720 save900@aol.com
Recording Secretary	Wanda Collins	913-621-3849
Public Relations and Service Officer	Theodore J Robinson	913-371-7720 save900@aol.com
Treasurer, Roster and Newsletter Editor	Byron Nichols	816-333-5151 byron666@earthlink.net
Alzheimer's Chair	Kathy Zunick	913-281-3335
Membership Chair	Shirley Newman	913-334-2544

**April Meeting:** There was no regular business meeting, as we held the 2010 Chapter Memorial Service and the 5th annual Josef Meditz Memorial Luncheon.

We held the Memorial Service at 11:45 a.m. This was to remember the 16 members who died during the previous 12 months (April 3, 2009 through April 7, 2010) as follows:

Milton F Adams	Loretta M McMillan
Alfred E Bell	Charles E Merritt
Edward Bielski	Verlee W.M. Mitchell
Beatrice Cannon	Valerie Noble
James M Johnson	Walter C Raynes
Bobbie Jean Johnson	Alice E Richardson
Ruby L Johnson-Gregg	Edward C Welty
Kenneth J Ladd	David Wilkins

About 60 members and guests (I don't know the exact number, our checkoff sheets weren't returned and I lost my notes on the count) attended the festivities. Many played bingo or caught up with old friends before the luncheon and Memorial Service. Either cash prizes or nicknacks were awarded for wins.

The Luncheon was catered by Fiorella's Jack Stack BBQ. Served were Beef Brisket, Smoked Turkey, Hickory Pit beans, Cheesy corn bake, coleslaw, potato salad, sauce, pickles, bread/buns, tea/coffee and peach or cherry cobbler. Some members took leftovers home or for others who couldn't come.

The Alzheimer's ticket drawing at the end of the luncheon was for #480718, Carolyn Taylor, who returned it for Alzheimer's. Member Evelyn J Tucker sent a generous check for \$25 for Alzheimer's this month, and we received the check from Best Choice (for our UPC's and bonus) for \$60. The ticket drawing, previous two checks and money given from Bingo winnings made a total of \$117.50 collected this month. So far this year the chapter has sent **\$151.00** to the Kansas Federation Alzheimer's coordinator (about \$0.62 per official member).

The luncheon ended about 2:00pm.

**Convention Notes:** This year's convention was held at the Downtown Ramada in Topeka. About 161 attended. Committee meetings were held after registration in the early afternoon. The opening session started at 6:45 Sunday with the introduction of officers and dignitaries, including the mayor of Topeka.

The Alzheimer's Live Auction was held from 7:30 to 8:30, which netted \$1,265 (only \$116 less than last year). Some notable items: an 18" Tin Man, made of funnels and cans, brought \$75; an original 2002 NARFE quilt, which already had raised a total of \$2000 in the past, went for \$100; an ornate king-size quilt brought \$150; a K-State Wildcat walnut clock took in \$60; many items brought in a range of \$20 to \$75. Two surprise 'losers' were a used VCR/dice-game pair and a very good miniature painting of a farmstead, each going for only \$2.50.

The Silent Auction, which ran Sunday night through Monday afternoon, brought in \$2,005, with a couple items yet to be claimed and paid for.

Both auctions had about 320 items total for \$3,270; about average for the last few years.

Chances were also sold for a quilt (won by Betty Warner) for a total of \$1,154 for Alzheimer's Research.

The 2009 goal for Alzheimer's in Kansas was \$5.25 per member. Actually collected was \$6.46 per member, for a total of \$30,604. A new goal for 2010 was set at \$5.50 per member. The chapter with the highest per-member collection was Chapter 383, Old Trooper, at \$34.45.

A report from Richard Thissen, the Region 5 Field VP, warned us that the national dues will have to raise; from the current \$29 to probably \$40 due to loss of membership and rising costs, even with quite a bit of cost cutting (almost half a million dollars recently). This may be approved as early as the national convention later this year. If

not, a larger increase will have to be done very soon. A unified dues structure, where all chapters would get the same amount of dues, probably is dead for now. Also, he summarized the the 'call letter' issued to health providers in the FEHBP effective for this fall's Open Season. Look for increased costs due to stipulations in the newly passed health insurance reform bill. There is nearly nothing which would save retirees money, and if poorer retirees want to take advantage of any subsidies to pay premiums, they would have to cancel their FEHBP coverage and join the new state pools (a rough decision).

Monday morning, elections were held for officers in the Kansas Federation. Carol Ek is the new President (she was the Secretary), 1<sup>st</sup> VP is now Dixie Thomas (the only contested race), 2<sup>nd</sup> VP is still Cindy Blythe, the new Secretary is Louise Lloyd and the Treasurer is still Jerry Ketter. Our Area 1A also elected a new Area VP, Judy Etter.

The Memorial Service was held Monday afternoon for the members who died during the past year. Our chapter had 18 deaths (2 more added since our service) and the Kansas total was 195.

At the Monday night Banquet, there was a 'surprise' guest - Abraham Lincoln (played by Dale Jerrick). Abe told us about highlights of his life and presidency. Also a drawing was held by the federation for 3 cash prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> place (\$250) went to Doris Erickson, 2<sup>nd</sup> (\$100) to Joan O'Shea and 3<sup>rd</sup> (\$50) went to Patsy Froemer. The rest of the money from ticket purchases, about the same as the prizes, went for operating expenses of the federation.

**Membership Update:** Deceased: Loretta M. McMillan, 97, KCK, 03/26/2010, FAA; Kenneth J. Ladd, 91, Overland Park, KS, 3/29/10, USPS; Buford W. Erwin, 87, KCK, 4/9/10, USPS; Carmen Thomas, 86, Oakland, CA, 12/11/2002, USPS (on non-renewal since 2003, just notified by national office); Mabel L. Ruby, 88, Clover, SC, 02/25/10, USPS. New Members: none. Dropped: one. Reinstated: one. Transferred to another chapter: one. Cancellation: one. We now have 237 members.

Note to families of members: When a member passes on, please be sure to contact the chapter's Service Officer (currently T.J. Robinson, 913-371-7720) for assistance for which agencies to contact (such as OPM) or forms to file. Also so that we may contact NARFE headquarters to either stop dues billing or withholding or to transfer membership to a widow or widower. Thank You.

Members with birthdays in **May** are:

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|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Dorothy M Barrett    | Larnell Johnson         |
| Charles K Bornschein | Robert E Kavanaugh      |
| Donald C Breiby      | Lena M O'Malley         |
| Phyllistine A Breiby | Mary M Oliver           |
| Maria Dinges         | <b>LaVerne Robinson</b> |
| Charles E Fithian    | Valentine J Ruzick      |
| M Louine Herman      | Barbara R Stafford      |

Members with birthdays in **June** are:

- |                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Mary L Bentz         | Velma V Koskan     |
| Kathleen E Bush      | Thomas P Lewis     |
| Janet Dillman        | Martha J Orth      |
| Alvin L Drake        | David S Podrebarac |
| Ardith A Gibbs       | Alene Seibloom     |
| Edna M Herzig        | Gladys R Spacek    |
| Constance L Holliday | Georgia C Story    |
| Gladys E Koska       | Evelyn J Tucker    |

**BOLD** = Attends many meetings yearly

The 30 members above have an age range of 65 to 103 and an average age of 84. Congratulations! If you were born in May or June and not in the above list, please notify the editor at the return address on the last page or e-mail address in the chapter officer list.

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Remember -- for ALL meetings, if you wish to play Bingo, bring your nickels & dimes. We usually play from just after 11 AM until lunch. Please Come! (We **can** make change for \$1 bills!)

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**Saturday, May 8<sup>th</sup> is the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, sponsored by the National Association of Letter Carriers and supported by NARFE.**

This nationwide effort is the nation's largest single-day food drive. NARFE members are urged to collect and bag nonperishable food items and place the bag(s) by your mailbox for your letter carrier (city or rural). [Reminder - contributions are deductible on your federal tax form if you itemize, just like any other charity, especially if you buy foodstuffs on a separate receipts for ease of tracking.]

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**Legislative, Financial and Health News (summarized from FEDWeek Bulletins and NARFE Legislative Hotlines):**

**Congress:** The "National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform" is scheduled to make recommendations to Congress by December. Under an agreement with congressional leaders, their recommendations would be considered in an expedited manner by both the House and Senate on an up-or-down vote without amend-

ments. They have practically eliminated cutting the "big three" – Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid – due to political realities. Therefore, they are targeting easier and smaller programs with "captive audiences" like federal retirees, even though we have already lost in excess of \$50 BILLION in deferred, reduced and canceled COLAs while Social Security COLAs were preserved back in the 1980s and 1990s. The Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund is projected to be fully funded and actuarially sound for at least 75 years, while Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid will consume at least two percentage points more than the entire Gross Domestic Product over the next ten years! (According to the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service.) Please inform/notify your Senators and Representatives of this fact and try to convince them if they cut our benefits they must cut all others! A draft budget resolution issued on April 22<sup>nd</sup> didn't seem to contain reductions in mandatory accounts crucial to federal retirement benefits, but, as we all know, that can change.

Also, on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Congress moved to block any pay raise for itself for 2011 as they did for 2010.

A House committee has approved two NARFE-supported bills. One, HR-4685, allows federal employees, like private sector employees, to invest the cash value of unused annual leave in their TSP account. The other, HR-1722, expands telework opportunities for all federal workers. Both bills are now ready for consideration on the House floor.

**Health News:** OPM is emphasizing preventative care and healthy lifestyle benefits for the 2011 FEHB plan year, telling health plans to eliminate out-of-pocket enrollee costs for preventative care, immunizations and screenings; saying cost sharing requirements are a major reason these benefits have low utilization rates (ignoring the fact that most of us don't want to exercise and diet: that's too much like work). Carriers in recent years have shifted more health care costs to out-of-pocket costs like co-payments to keep premium increases down and to discourage using medical care 'unnecessarily'. Also OPM wants carriers to expand smoking cessation benefits with no annual or lifetime limitations and no cost sharing. Carriers would not be required to find savings elsewhere to offset such costs, meaning premiums will necessarily rise. These and many other instructions came in the annual call letter for benefits effective this next calendar year.

OPM has proposed standardizing then open season dates for federal benefits. It is currently

from the Monday of the second full workweek in November to the Monday of the second full workweek in December. They want it to run from November 1 to 30 each year. OPM also proposed to allow the FEHB plans to offer three options without the requirement that one be a high deductible plan. Also, OPM finalized several changes regarding enrollment policies for the FEDVIP vision and dental program, making it easier for enrollees who lose a family member or dependent for various reasons to reduce their coverage almost immediately instead of waiting for the next open season. A person may also join FEDVIP immediately if coverage will be lost within 31 days under another vision or dental program.

NARFE President Baptiste congratulated Congressman James Moran (D-VA) on March 26 on introduction of legislation to require indexation of deferred annuities for departing federal employees. Cosponsors are Congressman Frank Wolf (R-VA), Congressman Gerry Connolly (D-VA) and Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC). Currently if an employee leaves federal service before age 62, the annuity earned must either be deferred until age 62 or contributions the employee made during service must be immediately withdrawn from the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund (this looks like it applies only to FERS retirees, not CSRS retirees?). Their annuity is not indexed to inflation, so many younger employees take out their contributions knowing that if they defer the benefit, it will decrease in value over time. Congressman Moran's legislation seeks to rectify this. No hearings have been held in committee yet.

**CPI/COLA News:** Halfway through the count toward the January 2011 retiree COLA, the count remains in negative territory at -0.9%. If the count finishes negative as it did for the 2010 COLA, benefits would again be frozen but not reduced (as law currently holds).

**TSP Funds:** . All TSP funds except the F (bond) fund posted gains in March, with the S (small company stock) fund leading with a 7.39% gain that brings its 12-month gain to 65.51%. The I (international stock) fund and the C (large company stock) fund up by 6.28 and 6.04%, respectively, for the month, for 12-month returns of 54.74 and 49.92%, respectively. The G (government securities) fund was up 0.27% for March and 3.15% over 12 months. The F fund dropped 0.11% in March but is still up 7.78% for the 12-month period. The March and 12-month returns for the life-cycle funds are: Income, 1.43 & 12.36%; 2010, 1.61 & 15.31%; 2020, 3.75 & 31.93%; 2030, 4.52 & 38.63%; 2040, 5.15 & 44.43%.

If any member who doesn't attend meetings wishes to contribute to the Alzheimer's Fund, you can send a check to the Treasurer (see the address on the back cover of the Scout). **Please make checks out to "NARFE Chapter 1160"**. We'll forward the contribution to the state coordinator and mention you with a thanks in the Scout. Thanks to all.

Note to members: Dues Withholding saves the national organization money and it saves you about \$4.40 over annually paid dues (\$30.60 national plus chapter vs. \$35.00). You don't have to remember to write that check or risk being dropped. **64%** of our members required to pay dues are already using withholding, why not you? Applications are on the NARFE website: [www.narfe.org](http://www.narfe.org).

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**Membership Rosters ...** are in an 8.5" x 11" format. Drop me a note at the return address block with \$2.00 each to offset printing and postage.  
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**OPM Retirement Information Center:**  
Write to: PO Box 45, Boyers, PA 16017-0045.  
Phone: 1-888-767-6738 (1-88USOPMRET)  
M-F, 6:30 AM to 7:45 PM Central Time.  
Hearing impaired TDD# is 1-800-878-5707.  
On the Web: [www.opm.gov/retire](http://www.opm.gov/retire).  
Remarriage, divorce, death of spouse, change of address or financial institution or amount of life insurance under FEGLI  
(among many other services)

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**NARFE Headquarters: 1-703-838-7760**  
(7 am to 3:45 pm Central Time)  
Call to get official forms at this number. See the NARFE magazine for various web addresses.  
Also, be sure to notify NARFE for address changes, deaths, etc. at 1-800-456-8410 or [memsrvcs@narfe.org](mailto:memsrvcs@narfe.org).  
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**Reminder:** Please send us your "**Best Choice**" UPC codes when you get a bunch! (It's not worth using 44¢ to mail one or two!) We get \$30 per 1000 codes (3¢ per code), plus an additional \$30 bonus once a year. The money goes to Alzheimer's Research. Send them either via a member you know who goes to the meetings or to the address in the return address block. Remember, we need only the bar codes, not the whole label. Saves \$.

**Byron Nichols, Editor, c/o  
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