



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

**MARCH MEETING:
11:00 A.M., Friday, 03/11/11**

**APRIL MEETING:
11:00 A.M., Friday, 04/08/11**

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

Chapter Officers		
President	Theodore J Robinson	913-371-7720 tjrobinson357@aol.com
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 tjrobinson357@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

January Meeting: The meeting was canceled due to lingering effects of the snow & ice, as well as various medical incapacitation of most of the officers.

February Meeting: Six members played five Bingo games prior to the luncheon. Some of the prize money was donated to the Alzheimer's Fund. The pot-luck luncheon was held from 12:15 to 12:50 pm.

For the business meeting, we had nine members and one guest present, a quorum. The meeting was called to order by T.J. Robinson. He announced that Regina had resigned as president and he had been appointed by the state president, Carol Ek, to fill in until the fall election. The opening prayer was led by Dorothy Guest and the flag salute was recited in unison. The October and November minutes were read by secretary Wanda Collins. The financial reports for November through January were read by treasurer Byron Nichols and submitted for audit. Kathy Zunick, the Alzheimer's chair, reported we nearly have enough UPCs to turn them in for both the regular and bonus payments. This will be contributed to the Alzheimer's fund. Membership chair Shirley Newman reported on the calls and letters she made to members whose dues were expiring. The kitchen committee reports they need more helpers. Bills were paid.

Vice-President Laverne Robinson suggested we institute a reward system for those bringing in new members at the April Meditz Memorial luncheon, possibly paid for with matching funds if anyone joins. This is being researched.

This year's Kansas Convention is from April 10-12 at the Junction City Marriot Courtyard. Two nights will come to \$188.66, including taxes. Registration is \$11 and the three meals are \$62 for a total of \$73. Breakfasts are up to each person; the buffet is \$8.95 + tax; other menu items are available. (If you have a Marriot membership, you can get a \$2 discount on breakfast.) Four members are attending; the President as DAL and 3 delegates. If any member wishes to attend, please call the President, T.J. Robinson, at 913-371-7720. He has the applications and other information about meals, etc. More transportation will have to be arranged, as my car will only hold a maximum of four with little luggage.

Attendee Ernestine Smith showed her Distinguished Member certificate & pin.

The Registration drawing was won by #4, Wanda Collins and the Ticket drawing was won by #491011, Lillian Green. Both prizes were contributed to the Alzheimer's Fund.

Meeting dismissed at 2:10 p.m.

Future Meeting: April is usually the time we read member deaths (memorial) and have a 'paid-for' luncheon to honor Josef Meditz. We should be calling members in the coming month to see who will attend. As usual, the meal will be FREE; provided by the chapter.

Membership Update: (Since February letter) Deceased: None. New Members: None. Reinstated: None. Dropped: None. Transferred to another chapter: None. We now have 219 members.

Note to families of members: When a member passes on, please be sure to contact the chapter's Service Officer (T.J. Robinson, 913-371-7720 or tjrobinson357@aol.com) for assistance for which agencies to contact (such as OPM) or forms to file. Also, call us 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 **March** are:

Rachel J Brady	Theresa M Ruzick
Margaret Flattery	Yusuf Shareef
Robert L Flattery	Anna M Stillman
Edna I Gunther	Barbara L Wells

Members with birthdays in **April** are:

Estelle R Barger	Norma L Finn
Jeremiah Bennett	Dorothy O Guest
Wanda L Campbell	Henry L Holliday
Virginia L Chiles	Jimmie Richard
Alma L Clark	Peggy Mae White
Geraldine Ellis Darden	William L Williamson
Frank A DeSeure	

BOLD = Attends many meetings yearly

The 21 members above have an age range of 72 to 92 and an average age of 86. Congratulations! If you were born in March or April 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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Legislative, Financial and Health News (summarized from FEDWeek & GEMS Bulletins and NARFE Legislative Hotlines):

NARFE: President Joseph Beaudoin issued a special message: "NARFE Responds to Attacks on Federal Workers and Retirees" on page 38 of the March NARFE Magazine.

Congress: The FY2012 budget submitted by President Obama to Congress on February 14 recommends freezing federal civilian salaries for the second year in a row and cutting non-defense discretionary spending by \$400 billion from a five-year freeze in that area. Plans to reduce federal civilian retirements and health benefits suggested in the December 2010 Fiscal Commission report were not included in the budget

The Federal community won a victory on February 19 when an amendment to the two-year pay freeze offered by Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA) was defeated by a bipartisan vote. It would have gone beyond the current freeze to also ban merit-based step increases.

March 4 is the deadline for Congress and the President to agree on a further continuing resolution to fund the government. House speaker Boehner has proposed a two-week extension with relatively modest spending reductions. Senate majority leader Reid signaled the Democrats would look for new cuts below the spending freeze proposed by the President. If a partial shutdown should occur, as in the 1995-1996 shutdown, annuity payments would continue and "essential" personnel would continue working.

As many of you know, your federal tax withholding probably increased in your first checks for 2011. This is due to the "Making Work Pay" credit (in the Stimulus Bill from February, 2009) was allowed to expire, unlike the Bush-era tax cuts, which were renewed. As a reminder, federal annuitants receiving payments from OPM can change their tax withholding amounts for both federal and state taxes by contacting OPM on the phone (1-888-767-6738) or using Services Online at www.opm.gov/retire. It is suggested retirees use the OPM on-line tax withholding calculator at the same site to avoid under-withholding. NARFE members who are unhappy about the expiration of the Make Work Pay credit should direct their complaints not at OPM but to their own representative and senators (whatever good that will do!).

TSP Funds: TSP investors may begin investing into the new 'L 2050' fund through new or transferred funds. It replaces the expired 2010 target date fund, which has been combined with the Income fund. The 2050 fund is the most aggressively invested fund, with the other targeted funds becoming more conservative as their target date approaches.

Health Benefits/Medicare: The Open Season for the FLTCIP long-term care program that begins April 4 will run through June 24, not May 27 as previously announced. During that period, current employees, their spouses or same-sex partners who meet certain qualifications may use a shortened form of underwriting, but most will need to use the long application that asks more questions about health and lifestyle.

FECA beneficiaries would be automatically switched to regular retirement benefits upon hitting age 65 under a proposal (S-261) by Sen. Collins (R-ME). Many have criticized the injury compensation program as having become a de facto retirement program that continues to pay benefits at a higher rate than the standard program long after it is clear the beneficiary will not return to work. The White House budget proposal contains a similar recommendation.

Other Pay Issues: The count toward the January 2012 retirement COLA now stands at a +0.4%, crossing into positive territory for the first time in

two years. What effect this has on the two-year freeze in salary and benefits is yet to be known. This increase in the CPI-W was mostly due to increases in prices for food and fuel.

About the Social Security tax rate reductions: Above the Social Security maximum, FERS employee contributions to Social Security stop, but contributions by CSRS-offset employees will continue at the standard 7% rate, since all contributions above that threshold go into the federal retirement fund. The payroll tax reduction also doesn't apply to pure CSRS employees; employee organizations tried, but failed, to get the tax break extended to them as part of a tax law passed in January. (CSRS employees don't pay into Social Security; instead, they pay 7% into the civil service retirement fund on all salary. In addition, all employees pay 1.45% into Medicare.)

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/Alzheimer Research"**. 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 (no bills to mail out) 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.

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 \$.

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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.

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 memberrecords@narfe.org.

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Other numbers of Interest:

Military Retirees: 800-321-1080
 V.A.: 800-827-1000 TSP: 877-968-3778
 Social Security: 800-772-1213

NARFE Sunflower Chapter 1160
 c/o Byron Nichols, Editor
 9000 Holly Street
 Kansas City MO 64114-3528

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