

THE SHAWNEE SIGNAL
Chapter 1162 Shawnee Mission Kansas
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association



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www.narfe-chapter1162.org

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Flo Biehl, Chapter President

Spring has sprung and the grass has risen at least I hope Spring has finally arrived. It always revives our spirits and so do some things at NARFE. We are getting ready for the Annual Federation Convention in Manhattan and that is always exciting. We are hoping to find some new ideas that will help charge us up. We also are having an evening meeting this month. It is at Ryan's on 75th street at 6:00 pm. This should appeal to our active employees. It is a dinner meeting and we should finish in daylight so that no one is uncomfortable about the drive home.

We also have exciting news about the dues referendum which will take place by mail in September. Kansas proposed this at the National meeting in Albuquerque and again in Louisville. Each time it came close to passing by the two thirds it needed, but close wasn't enough. It basically says that everyone pays the same dues, no specials or things that change year to year so you don't know where you stand. We had our first reading of the proposal at our March meeting. We'll talk more about it as time moves on. In addition, a copy of the proposed referendum will be included in a future newsletter.

Be sure and come to the April meeting. Jim Eschrich will be our speaker. He talks about Courage for the Rest of Us. He has led a very interesting life and he will share some of those challenges with us.

Tom Raby, 1st VP, Membership & Alzheimer's

Recently headquarters issued an "Information Release" that announced that NARFE has gone over the \$8,000,000.00 mark in money raised for Alzheimer's research. This kind of achievement is what gives many of us the energy to continue with our work. I have seen our members selling crafts, raffling all sorts of prizes, passing the hat, walking in memory walks, donating items for auctions and various other activities. At each convention there are folks who don't get much recognition, that sort, catalog and inventory thousands of the items we donate for our Alzheimer's Auctions. Several of our chapters have members that have challenged others to contribute by matching any and all donations up to a certain dollar figure. In two cases I know of, this dollar figure was in the hundreds of dollars. I don't feel guilty when I "recycle" the pounds of charity literature that we get in the mail. However, I would feel terrible if I weren't able to give both time and money to the Alzheimer's cause. Remember that all NARFE contributions are dedicated to research. Also remember, our partner is the Alzheimer's Association, based in Chicago. Please make your tax-deductible check payable to "NARFE/ALZHEIMER'S". Bring your check to any chapter meeting, or the Executive Board Meeting; or, mail it to me and I will forward it to our Federation Chair. (Tom Raby; 15117 S. Symphony Dr. Apt 1203; Olathe, KS 66062.) (Reminder—If you have any items for the Alzheimer's Auctions to be held during the Kansas Federation's Annual conference, please call me at 913-829-6025. Items should be new, unused or collectible items with at \$5 or greater value.)

I'll report on the convention in the next newsletter.

Future Meeting Dates/Activities:

April 26th – 28th -- Kansas Federation Annual Meeting, Manhattan, KS.

April 28th -- Chapter meeting & Dinner, 6:00 p.m. – Ryans's, 10810 W.75th. Just east of 75th & Nieman.

Program: Guest Speaker, Jim Eschrich – "Courage for the Rest of Us"

(Buffet) Cost: Age 60 and above \$9.19 PLUS TAX (.72) = \$9.91; Age 59 & below - \$9.69 plus tax (.76) = \$10.45. Drinks \$1.79 plus tax = \$1.93. Gratuity will be paid for by the chapter.

May 13th – Social Meeting at Hometown Buffet, 75th & Quivira, 1:00 p.m. RSVP Clyde Shellhammer, 492-0091.

May 26th – Chapter Meeting, Overland Park Lutheran Church, 79th & Lowell, 1:30 p.m.

Legislation

The head of the Senate committee that handles federal employee issues, Sen. Joseph Lieberman, I-Conn., has endorsed parity between federal civilian and uniformed military personnel raises in January 2010, saying he found the Obama administration's proposal for 2 percent for the former group while 2.9 percent for the latter to be "disappointing." In an annual statement of plans for the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, he said that he plans to work "to see whether we can find our way clear to provide a pay increase for federal employees on a par with that for military personnel." Pay parity has been the practice in nearly all years over the last two decades.

A bill offered in the Senate (S-629) would ease restrictions on federal retirees returning to work for the government by allowing reemployment of federal annuitants without offset between their salaries and annuities for part-time or project work of up to 520 hours in the first six months following the start of annuity payments, up to 1,040 hours in any 12-month period, and up to 3,120 hours total for the annuitant's lifetime. The reemployed annuitants would not be eligible to make new contributions to the TSP or increase their annuities, and their insurance coverage would be unaffected for parity in the next raise.

(Information from FEDweek weekly newsletter, March 25, 2009).

On Thursday, April 2nd, before passing their fiscal 2010 budget resolution the House of Representatives defeated a substitute amendment offered by Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI) which would have cut entitlements – like Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid – by \$1.3 trillion over ten years and would have included a reduction of \$10.263 billion in federal civil service retirement and health benefits. The Senate adopted a similar but not identical budget resolution (S. Con. Res. 13) setting the stage for a House-Senate Conference Committee after the Easter/Passover recess (April 5-18). The House resolution, in contrast to President Obama's budget proposal, assumes pay parity for federal civilian and military employees. The Senate resolution is silent on this issue.

On April 1st, the House approved H.R. 1804, legislation which would allow Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) employees to credit their unused sick leave toward their retirement and would make certain improvements to the federal Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). The Legislative Program adopted by delegates to NARFE's biennial national convention held September 2008 in Louisville, Kentucky includes support for legislation to ensure that all federal civilian retirement programs credit unused sick leave toward retirement. NARFE played a key role, along with other federal and postal organizations, in the passage of H.R. 1804.

Beyond FERS sick leave, the bill would automatically enroll newly-hired federal employees in the TSP and make them eligible to receive an immediate matching contribution from their employing agency. Moreover, the measure would widen TSP's offered plans to include a "Roth" option like many private employers do in 401(k) plans. Under a "Roth" option, contributions are after taxes have been paid. Roth plan principal and earnings can be withdrawn tax free. House passage of this legislation is a victory for federal workers, but it still must be approved by the Senate where the NARFE Legislative Department is already promoting it.

The new feature of the NARFE web site, listing **Lapsed Cosponsors** of NARFE supported Premium Conversion and Repeal of GPO/WEF, has been updated to reflect the "recovery" of several past cosponsors. This feature appears under **NARFE LEGISLATIVE ACTIVISTS** on the Legislative Department Home Page. NARFE activists have again proven that past cosponsors will do so again if contacted in sufficient numbers. (Information from NARFE Legislative Hotline, #667, April 3, 2009).

Note: At our March 24th meeting members were asked to sign postcards to be sent to our Senators asking them to support the repeal of the GPO/WEF provisions, as well as supporting FERS sick leave credit towards retirement, along with our Congressman Dennis Moore regarding FERS as he already supports repeal of the GPO/WEF provisions.

Your April Shawnee Signal

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