

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

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THE WYANDOTTE SCOUT

Vol. 42, #1; January & February, 2017
 Byron Nichols, Editor

Sunflower Chapter 1160 @ Eisenhower Rec. Center 2901 N 72 nd St., KCK 66109 (driveway south of school)	11-11:45am Bingo; Noon Lunch; 1-1:15pm Program (if any); Business Meeting after program.	No meeting in JANUARY 01/13/2017	2nd FRIDAY in FEBRUARY 02/10/2017
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President: Byron K. Nichols	816-333-5151 byron666@earthlink.net
Recording Secretary: Wanda Collins	913-621-3849
Alzheimer's, Exec Cmte: Kathy Zunick	913-281-3335
Editor, Roster: Byron K. Nichols	816-333-5151 byron666@earthlink.net

Vice-President: Carolyn Taylor	913-205-7228
Treasurer: Jane Lenderman-Kruse	913-441-3484 quill@planetkc.com
Membership: Shirley Newman	913-334-9444
Sunshine: Ernestine Smith	913-287-8529

As usual, this newsletter may be viewed online on the Kansas NARFE site: www.ksnarfe.org.

If bad weather occurs and driving becomes hazardous (i.e. if the KCK school district cancels classes), we will cancel a meeting. Usual attendees will be notified by phone as soon as possible

November Meeting: Cancelled. The Eisenhower Center was closed for Veteran's Day.

December Meeting: Four members played Bingo before lunch. Six attended lunch.

Our guest, Ron Miller from Blue Cross / Blue Shield gave a short talk and took questions about their current offerings under the federal health plan and Advantage supplement to Medicare.

The business meeting was called to order at 1:45 pm with six voting members (a valid quorum) and one non-voting member. The pledge was recited in unison. The minutes for the October meeting were read by Secretary Collins. Jane Kruse then read the treasurer's report. No Birthdays. Bills were authorized to be paid (\$25 for the December Alzheimer's contribution).

The registration drawing (\$5) was won by #2, Kay Frye, and the half-and-half drawing (\$10) was won by #858381, Jane Kruse. Both were contributed to the Alzheimer's Fund. The meeting was adjourned at about 2:01 pm.

January Meeting: Cancelled due to weather prediction of ice and snow.

February Meeting: No program planned as of this mailing.

Remember - for ALL meetings, if you wish to play Bingo, bring your nickels & dimes. We usually play from just after 11 AM until lunch. Cost is 5¢ per card per game, 10¢ per card for the last game (Blackout); which funds the winners' prizes. Please Come! (We **can** make some change!)

Membership Update (11/1-12/31/16): New: None. Reinstated: None. Dropped for non-renewal: One. Transfer into chapter: None. Transfer out of chapter: None. Deaths: One: Gloria Willis, 85, 12/27/16, KCK, widow of a V.A. employee. Voluntary cancellation: None. Membership transfer from deceased member to spouse: None. We now have 96 members.

We've awarded "Distinguished Member" status to Georgia Story for being a member over 20 years. Congratulations! The certificate is on its way!

Note to families of members: When a member passes on, please be sure to 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 January:

Helen J Ambrose Aleta M Johnson
Ida Louise Bland Mary J Relic
Donald C Castor Dorothy L Weller
Louisa A Fletcher Louis E White

Members with birthdays in February:

Roland B Berg E Ruth McIntosh
Betty B Cramer Violet Rutherford
Dorotha V Linam

Bolded = attends meetings regularly

If you were born in January or February and not in the above list, please notify the editor at the newsletter return address or the e-mail address in the officer list above.

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

Money Matters: An average of 2.1% pay raise (plus any locality adjustments) will occur starting January 2, 2017. Retirees' benefits will rise by 0.3% for CSRS and eligible FERS retirees. The same COLA also applies to Social Security, military and survivor benefits.

The 2017 Medicare Part B premium is \$109 per month for most enrollees, an increase of about \$4. Due to the tiny COLA, under the "hold harmless" provision, certain enrollees will pay more, \$134 per month, an increase of about \$12 (those who cannot withhold Medicare premiums from a Social Security benefit). Those with high taxable incomes also pay the higher amount plus surcharges from \$53.50 to \$294.60 per month. The Part B annual deductible will also rise from \$166 to \$183 for all enrollees.

The Social Security FICA tax of 6.2% will now apply to salaries up to \$122,700, up from the 2016 maximum of \$118,500 (with some exceptions). There is no limit on the 1.45% Medicare tax paid by all employees. For those drawing Social Security benefits, the earnings test applying to beneficiaries aged 62 through "full retirement age" (currently 66) will rise to \$16,920 from \$15,720. Those lose \$1 in benefits for every \$2 in earnings above the limit.

OPM: The Office of Personnel Management issued a proposal to change the amount the Post Office must put into its retirement fund. The rule allows the Post Office to calculate its payments based on assumptions of its own workforce specifically rather than the federal workforce as a whole. If implemented, the rule could save the Post Office a substantial amount of money. Nothing was said about past contributions which multiple reports estimate billions of surplus dollars have been paid in.

NARFE legislative accomplishments during the 116th Congress ending December, 2016:

Thwarted ALL attempts by Congress to cut the earned pay and benefits of federal employees and retirees.

Successfully mitigated disproportionate and unfair increases in Medicare premiums.

Protected postal retirees' health benefits through the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP).

In response to significant spikes in premiums (by an average of 83 percent and as much as 126 percent) under the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP), NARFE secured critical information and support for enrollees and pushed Congress to act to avoid a repeat of the situation.

Worked to keep Association members informed regarding the data breaches at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

Worked to increase identity theft protection provided to individuals impacted by the data breaches at OPM.

Supported efforts to protect TSP participants from receiving bad financial advice.

Increased state income tax exclusion for New Jersey retirees

Don't forget to read your NARFE magazine each month. It has more news and information than can be summarized here.

If any member who doesn't attend meetings wishes to contribute to the Alzheimer's Fund **please write the chapter number on the check (Chapter 1160) and make your check out to "NARFE/Alzheimer Research"**. Send your check to the **Newsletter Editor** (see the return address area). We'll forward the contribution to the state coordinator and mention you with 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 those who renew annually \$6 each year (the equivalent of Chapter dues) [\$40 national plus \$6 chapter vs. \$40 total under dues withholding (effective as of August, 2011)]. You don't have to remember to write that check or risk being dropped. **57%** of our members required to pay dues are already using withholding, why not you? Applications are on the NARFE website at: www.narfe.org.

Reminder: Please send us your "Best Choice" UPC codes when you get a bunch! (It's not worth the postage 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 NARFE/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 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 6:45 PM Central Standard Time.
Hearing impaired TDD# is 1-800-878-5707.
On the Web: www.opm.gov/retire.
E-mail: retire@opm.gov.

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 (hq@narfe.org)
606 N. Washington St, Alexandria, VA 22314
(phone 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 E-mail memberrecords@narfe.org.

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Other numbers/websites/e-mails of Interest:
V.A.: www.va.gov; 800-827-1000
TSP: www.tsp.gov; 877-968-3778
Social Security: www.ssa.gov; 800-772-1213
FEDVIP: fedvip@opm.gov FEGLI: fegli@opm.gov
FEHBP: fehb@opm.gov

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Membership Rosters are in an 8.5" x 11" format.
Write me a note to the return address block on page 1 and I will send you one (members only!).

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