



2013 OFFICERS and CHAIRS

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Legislative Chair	John Surritte	785-856-0558
Sunshine	Sandy Nease	785-979-5481

KUDOS & THANK YOU'S TO:

☞ The Delegates for the Kansas Federation 2013 Convention who will represent Chapter 378. Tom Hunzinger, John Surritte, Linda Surritte, Wendy Hambly.

KANSAS FEDERATION CONVENTION APRIL 28-30, 2013
THE HOLIDAY INN & SUITES OVERLAND PARK WEST
8787 REEDER ROAD
OVERLAND PARK, KS 66214
913-888-8440
NARFE HOST CHAPTER: 1162 SHAWNEE MISSION KANSAS

Door Prizes: We invite each chapter to bring a wrapped door prize (\$10-15) for door prize drawings held throughout the convention.

Alzheimer's Auctions (Live and Silent) Items Needed: Please provide items to be auctioned at each. These items should be "new" or of "antique" quality and have a minimum value of \$5. Bring items to the meeting or phone Linda Surritte to make other arrangements. 785-856-0558

ALZHEIMER'S John Scott

March chapter donations=\$18. YTD = \$259.25

LEGISLATIVE John Surritte

NARFE Legislative Hotline (24/7): 877-217-8234
U.S. Capitol Switchboard: 866-220-0044
Check out the March meeting summary (right column) for Kansas info.

SUNSHINE Sandy Nease

If you know someone who needs a card for illness, sympathy, or a special event, let me know.
Sandy Nease 785-979-5481

APRIL 17TH Roger Lemmons

The meeting is at Conroy's Pub. The program begins at noon with lunch at 12:30 p.m. followed by a brief meeting.

The topic of April's program is WATER...our concerns, is there a continued unlimited supply, and quality. We searched no further than our own ranks to cover this topic. Tom Huntzinger can provide us with background and issues surrounding water availability. Tom has worked for the USGS for many years and is well versed on the subject of water in Kansas.

MARCH 20TH MEETING RECAP

Nancy Thellman, recently re-elected Douglas County Commissioner, presented a general overview covering the health of the county, activities in the Kansas Legislature impacting Douglas County, investments in the county, and history of Freedoms Frontier Heritage.

She said the health of Douglas County, the 5th largest county in Kansas, is good. The commission is currently working on the 2014 budget. It was originally projected that there would be a 4-5 million dollar shortage, but it now looks like it will be 1-2% or about \$1,000,000. The \$60,000,000 annual budget is mostly funded by property taxes. The current unemployment rate is 5-6% in Kansas, with Douglas County at 4.8%. Normal is around 3% in the county. Indicators that the economy is improving are fewer storefront vacancies and building is going on.

She represents 36,000 from Baldwin, Eudora, and SE and N Lawrence. In recent months, the Kansas Legislature has become a concern because of legislation being considered. Thellman listed the following:

1. Douglas County depends on revenue from property taxes and state money for judicial and social services. If the state cuts funding, the county will have to cut services or raise taxes to cover the difference.
2. Tax Reduction for Businesses: A Machinery Bill being considered would allow businesses to count machinery as *personal property* and therefore, non-taxable. This would impact the county's budget with the Douglas County losing of 10's of millions of dollars in revenue.
3. Environmental: A bill that would shift the control of overseeing septic systems from the

county to the state, would result in the county losing control of protecting its water sources with reduced regulation of water/sewage treatment that could allow large hog operations.

5. Public/Mental Health and Social Services: the state continues to cut millions of dollars of state support. Douglas County paid a high ransom to retain the Social Services office, and the promises made by the state are not being fulfilled.

6. Local Elections: Current state administration is trying to change the timing of county elections to make the elections more partisan. Candidates would have to declare a party.

7. Farmland: Kansas law has protected land-owners. Proposed changes would open land to foreign and corporate investors. The law would circumvent prevention of massive swine operations or pollution. Agriculture is huge in the state and Douglas County. (\$41,000,000 in Douglas County)

8. Access to Legislators: There is a movement to prevent counties from using taxes to lobby in Kansas legislature for the counties and municipalities. Counties and cities would have input only by invitation from the legislature. It is meant to limit local authority.

On a more upbeat note, Thellman listed the Destination Management Inc., which promotes tourism and manages conventions, touring, and Freedom Frontier Heritage, and the proposed Rec Center. Destination Management oversees Freedom Frontier Heritage (FFH), signed on by President Bush II. FFH is currently planning signage, celebrations, and restorations. Douglas County and Lawrence have rich history. Quantrill's Raid was the largest act of terrorism on U.S. soil until the Oklahoma bombing. The Watkins Museum will have a permanent exhibit.

Thellman said there are economic reasons for investing in development such as the proposed Rec Center and Freedom Frontier Heritage. Tourism brings in \$60 M in Douglas County. Fort Scott's buying a \$1,000,000 area for development resulted in the creation of 15 new jobs. Overland Park invested in sport facilities. Regular bookings were down 23%, but sporting bookings are up 35%. Even in bad times, people will travel and participate in kids sporting events, so OP's investment is paying off. Sporting events for OP was "recession proof."

The KDOT Bypass is funded by federal and state funds. Thellman thinks the bypass will happen

and work will begin in the spring of 2014. The Kansas legislature is looking to make up lost funds and there is talk of taking KDOT for the General Fund.

MEMBERSHIP

Betty Scribner

Welcome to newcomer Tom Huber who is now officially a NARFE member! We had two reinstatements this month and I am very happy to welcome these members back to our chapter. Sadly, we have lost a long-time member, Martha Bone, who passed away recently.

In January, statistics included the number of new members to our chapter during 2012. It was suggested that it would be good to list those members. Please make them welcome to NARFE Chapter 378. They are Margaret Atkinson, Byron Baur, Thaddeus Brzustowicz, Craig Dare, Jerry Feese, Mona Gonzales, Susan Johnson, Hazel Lauppe, Kelly McCartney, Clyde Mermis, William Moss, Tia Palmer-Hardy, Valerie Roper, Jerry Sherman, Marian Swain, Gary Tanner, Andrew Tuttle.

Last month we discussed some added privileges and benefits of being a government active employee or retiree. These included belonging to the NARFE Premier Federal Credit Union, applying for a Bank of America MasterCard Credit card offering WorldPoints rewards, and the great mortgage rates and reduced fees of the NARFE. Check out Home Benefits online at www.narfe.org/MemberPerks.

Auto Insurance is another area in which most of us are interested but often don't like our rates! If you have a good driving record? Then, you may be eligible for quality car insurance from GEICO at discounted rates.

An additional insurance (**NARFE Insurance Services**) is also available! It is designed and administered by Marsh U.S. Consumer, a service of Seabury & Smith, Inc., exclusively for NARFE members. Coverage includes senior age whole life, term life, Medicare supplements, hospital income plan, short-term recovery insurance, pet insurance, accidental death and dismemberment, cancer care, enhanced dental insurance and long-term care. More information about these insurance programs can be found at narfe.org/perks

Betty Scribner, 785-865-8235 or
email: scribner@sunflower.com.

NARFE E CHAPTERS

The following article by Ames, Iowa NARFE Chapter 551 President, W.L. Mengling from the March 2013 Newsletter is reprint here with permission.

A topic that has engendered rather heated discussion recently is the potential for NARFE e-chapters to significantly lessen membership in the more conventional NARFE chapter. In fact, in more sparsely populated areas, wherein attendance at chapter and board meetings requires many members to travel considerable distances, the option of belonging to an e-chapter may signal the demise of the corresponding active chapters as we now know them; especially in areas where the number of potential NARFE members is also on the decline. Consequently, an argument for e-chapters is that they may actually result in better retention of such members as well as increase our overall membership for a variety of other reasons.

For many of us, membership in an e-chapter is not a serious consideration because we value the opportunity for meeting with friends and colleagues to discuss, among other things, possible solutions to the existing and potential challenges that we face as active and retired federal employees. For others, however, a reason as straightforward and understandable as an opportunity to more conveniently participate in NARFE activities, albeit somewhat indirectly, may temper their decision.

For you, who may ask why the birth of e-chapters, the answer is twofold, namely, members and finances. First the number of NAFE members over the past 20 years or so has decreased precipitously. E-chapters may change this downward trend. Second, with decreasing numbers of members our financial resources are negatively affected. And my guess is that most of you will agree that dollars and votes, in addition to facts and reasonable assumptions, go a long way in convincing a politician to walk the "correct" path.

The argument against creation and expansion of e-chapters is that they will draw their membership primarily from the current and future membership of conventional chapters. The issue of competition for membership, and the presumption by some that conventional chapters are more likely to vigorously address and achieve the goals of NARFE, suggest that the overall impact of NARFE might be lessened by e-chapters. However, in regard to the transfer of

an appreciable number of members and appreciable number of members from conventional chapters to e-chapters, a recent study by Richard Thiessen, NARFE National Treasurer, has indicated that not likely to be the case. In fact, survey responses revealed that a very large number of NARFE members, who had joined e-chapters, would not otherwise have joined NARFE. Keep in mind that although the study in reference wasn't national in scope (it included data from 3 states, Florida, Nebraska, and Ohio) the results strongly suggest that e-chapters are unlikely to have a major impact on the total membership of conventional chapters. And, while the question of whether conventional chapters are likely to be more effective in achieving our goals is still an issue, there is reason to be optimistic that e-chapters will enhance, rather than detract from the mission and impact of NARFE.

**A NARFE e-chapter features an on-line blog-like format designed to keep chapter members informed and involved in matters affecting active and retired federal employees while doing away with the need for in-person participation. Members also receive the NARFE monthly magazine.*