



NARFE CHAPTER 378, Lawrence, KS Newsletter November 2017

2017 OFFICERS AND CHAIRS

President	Tom Huber	785-843-1157
1 st Vice President	Roger Lemmons	785-840-9594
2 nd Vice President	Elaine Seeman	785-331-2280
Secretary	Wendy Hambly	913-845-0121
Treasurer	Cheryl Travis	785-865-7580
Membership	Dianne Throop	785-841-1408
Service Officer	John Rowe	785-856-8759
Newsletter	Wendy Hambly	913-845-0121
NARFE PAC Chair	John Rowe	785-856-8759
Alzheimer's Chair	John Scott	785-542-3510
Legislative Chair	Gordon Montney	785-760-0595
Sunshine	Mary Margaret Rowen/Clara Arnold	785-842-8847 785-842-1680
NARFE NET Coor	Jerry Feese	785-842-4330

NOVEMBER 15TH MEETING R. LEMMONS

NARFE Free State Chapter 378 will meet Wednesday, November 16th, 2017, at noon, in the south room of Conroy's. The presentation begins at noon, followed by lunch, and a brief meeting. Lunch is optional. The cost is \$10 and includes a choice of 1 of 3 entrées, coffee or tea, and gratuity.

November's presenter is Douglas County Agent, Marlin Bates, who will fill us in on the fairgrounds improvements and extension office services.

December's meeting is the annual Christmas Party at the Smith Center of Brandon Woods. Reservations and remittance are required by December 12th, because we need a head count. The reservation form can be found on page 3.

KUDOS AND THANK YOU'S

- Linda and John Surritte for their continued support of Chapter 0378 and Alzheimer's Research.
- John & Martha Rowe for opening up the clubhouse, helping to bring things in, and set up the beverages.
- Lew Ruona for helping to organize the food table.
- Cheryl Travis for checking people in at the meeting
- Ace & Lareeda Hickey for cleaning up and locking
- Dianne Throop for helping to organize the October meeting.

RECAP OCTOBER 18TH MEETING

Lawrence Mayor, Leslie Soden covered Lawrence's Strategic Plan, the long-term plan for the direction of the city. Getting plans started moves at a glacial pace. Mid November is the first review. The plan is in the early stages, so there are no metrics of the measure of success. Two all day retreats were part of developing this strategic plan. For complete information visit the website: <https://lawrenceks.org/strategic-plan/>

In developing the plan, language was important. A Vision Statement was developed first, followed by the Strategic Plan and several other statements.

The Mission Statement reads as follows: *We are committed to providing excellent City services that enhance the quality of life for the Lawrence community.*

The Vision Statement: *The City of Lawrence—supporting an unmistakably vibrant community with innovative, equitable, transparent and responsible local government.*

Organizational Values include: *Character, Competence, Courage, Collaboration, Commitment*
 Priority Initiatives: *Every two years the City Commission will identify priority initiatives that they have identified as being important within one of the Critical Success Factors.* The current priority initiatives are listed on the website and you can click on the individual priorities to view the status of the priority. There are 45 advisory boards and joint ones with the county. Through review of existing advisory boards and commissions, they will sunset

ALZHEIMER'S

JOHN SCOTT

There was a donation of \$73 at the October meeting and a \$400 donation. The year-to-date total is \$924.

SUNSHINE

Please remember to notify one of the Sunshine ladies, Clara Arnold and Mary Margaret Rowen, [their phone numbers are on page 1 at the top of left column] if you know of someone who is ill, on the mend, or celebrating a birth, birthday, or anniversary.

NOTE: Information for the December Christmas Party and the Reservation Form on page 3. A map and directions will be in the December NARFE Chapter 0378 Newsletters. Remember to get you reservations and remittance in BY DECEMBER 12th!

old ones, merge some, and develop new ones. She feels diversity is important. That has been more difficult. The following is a list of items to be addressed:

- 1) Transit – She hoping transportation commission will coordinate usage better
- 2) Review City’s practices for ongoing professional development and align efforts to achieve excellence around the Commission’s priorities.
- 3) Identify barriers to having high-speed fiber--no good ideas right now; will work on it.
- 4) Review 9th Street Plans - 9th St. east of Massachusetts St. for art area. A grant and is being used for streets and sidewalks. May have some statuary on the streets.
- 5) Develop a City facility master plan and comprehensive facility maintenance plan.
- 6) Develop a plan to implement priority based budgeting. Budgeting varies for different organization, *i.e.* Parks and Recreation wanted to replace parking lot. She didn't perceive it as a priority, as it has no potholes. She voted against the budget because she wanted a priority budget.
Previously the City did not take part in county plans. The county has done a good job east of town. There will be several years of planning. Some people want an ice rink, while tall buildings downtown will be a big item for discussion.
- 7) Develop and communicate a long-term financial strategy. She feels economic growth and security are most important. It is not just about businesses, but should also include individuals. Her economic philosophy is "trickle up." She developed Economic policy for Venture Park. The City put in dollars for infrastructure, so we need to develop it.
- 8) Develop a Master Plan for the Downtown that includes needed and desirable assets, infrastructure, and uses.

Items to address include affordable housing; the need for jobs, and one of her Pipe dreams for Venture Park is some kind of day care that is paid for by nearby businesses, and a little medical clinic. These things have to do with the prosperity of individuals.

Critical Success Factors:

- 1) *Effective Governance and Professional Administration stresses communication and*

transparency in planning.

- 2) *Safe, Healthy, and Welcoming Neighborhoods. Involves promoting opportunities for healthy lifestyles, access to affordable housing, and services, which help individuals meet their basic needs.*
- 3) *Innovative Infrastructure and Asset Management.*
- 4) *Commitment to Core Services.*
- 5) *Sound Fiscal Stewardship.*
- 6) *Collaborative Solutions.*
- 7) *Economic growth and Security. Foster and environment that provides individuals and businesses the opportunity for economic security and empowers people’s ability to thrive.*

Questions and Answers

Q: Fiber working in KC what are they doing?

A: It would cost Lawrence \$80,000,000 to lay fiber all over city. Google stopped it to lay cable in Johnson County. Eudora has its own electrical and made it easier for them to lay high speed. The City has some laid *i.e.* for traffic light control.

She was enthusiastic about the National STAR Program is a community rating system which lays out what makes a city vibrant. It is a ranking system. Lawrence is trying to raise its ranking. She wants more renewable energy.

The 2018 budget: Revenues = \$191,318,0005, Expenditures = \$196,847,000 (5,000,000 more than revenues). Tax dollars in 2018 will be allocated as follows: The county takes majority of property tax, while the City gets more from sales tax 5% or the 9.05%).

Q: Can we eliminate taxes on food?

A: She feels that is not controlled by the city control. The state controls the whether or not food is taxed.

Q: What are the ordinances for downtown? What is legal for panhandling?

A: We do have ordinances if they [street people] are aggressive. The problem is that we run into individual rights. The City has a new police chief, so maybe there will be more walking-police downtown. Would like to add more cameras, but that is a whole can of worms involving privacy, and who monitors the cameras. Bike is not allowed on the sidewalk. Need a more robust police presents. There are a lot of mental health issues. People seem to be ignoring rules.

Q: The City approved building a tunnel on 19th St.
 A: There is a grant from KDOT and federal funds totaling \$1.6M. It will be split between KU and City. Want to look at lighting and cameras. Security is important.

Q: The development on New Hampshire--what changed to enable it to be approved?
 A: Developer was planning to live on top floor. He removed top floor from the rebate incentive. Ten percent should be affordable housing. Developer is doing 1 of 12 units as affordable housing. Other commissioners opted for it. Unit is promised to organization for affordable housing.

Q. Farmland is now Venture Park. How to pay for nitrogen water clean up?
 A: Nitrogen water that is currently stored in tanks could be piped to farmers.

2018 COLA

The 2018 COLA will be 2%. The following is NARFE's President Richard Thissen's response to the COLA announcement.

"Following two years of no and low cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), today's announcement was eagerly awaited by millions of Americans who rely on the increase to keep up with the rising prices for food, housing, gas and medical care. Unfortunately, the 2.0 percent COLA provides only partial relief and serves as a reminder that our method for calculating the increasing cost of goods and services is out of sync with the reality faced by federal annuitants, Social Security recipients and military retirees. Our nation's seniors spend more than twice as much on medical care than the population measured by the current formula to calculate COLAs, the CPI-W. Congress must act to implement a new formula that adequately measures costs incurred by seniors.

"The COLA is outpaced by the average 6.1 percent increase in health care premiums for federal retirees in 2018. On top of this, Medicare premiums increased disproportionately for most federal annuitants during the last two years, and long-term care premiums sharply increased by 83 percent, on average. A new a cost-of-living formula that doesn't force these Americans to take one step forward, then two steps back is long overdue.

"Today's COLA announcement highlights why

Congress should require use of the CPI-E (Consumer Price Index for the elderly) as the measurement for setting COLAs. It is crystal clear that the current formula does not accurately reflect how seniors spend their limited annuities."

CHAPTER 378 DECEMBER CELEBRATION

The December Chapter Party is at the Smith Center of Brandon Woods.

The reservation and remittance are due by Wednesday, DECEMBER 13th.

The menu includes:

2 Entrées - Beef Brisket, whole beef brisket rubbed with barbecue seasoning or mixed herbs is slow cooked overnight. Trimmed, sliced and served with a sauce of choice, usually barbecue or sherry cream.

Chicken Florentine, baked boneless chicken breast in a creamy spinach sauce with fresh tomatoes;

3 Sides - roasted red potatoes, steamed vegetables, and baked asparagus

Chocolate Dream Dessert, Brandon Woods' signature, Layers of chocolate cake, chocolate pudding and whipped cream.

So make your reservation by

- 1) Completing the reservation below.
- 2) Writing a check payable to NARFE Chapter 378
- 3) Returning the form and remittance to:

Wendy Hambly
 25029 Dehoff Dr., Tonganoxie, KS 66086
 by December 12th

Names:	\$16/person
Total remittance:	

-  We will begin gathering at 11:15am.
-  Lunch will be served at 11:45am.
-  Following lunch, we'll be entertained by a return appearance of the saxophone quartet who entertained us in 2016, install the 2018 officers, sing a few carols, and maybe (if we've all been really good this year) Santa's Helper will have some surprises for us.

TSP MODERNIZATION ACT

NARFE applauds passage of the TSP Modernization Act of 2017, H.R. 3031, by the Senate on November 6. The legislation would provide more flexible withdrawal options for Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) participants. With passage in the House of Representatives last month, the bill now heads to the President's desk.

The legislation would allow multiple, partial post-separation withdrawals, which participants can time to their individual needs, and would provide multiple, age-based withdrawals for participants who are still working and are older than age 59-1/2. The TSP Modernization Act also would provide greater flexibility by allowing the election of quarterly or annual payments and permitting periodic withdrawals that can be changed at any point during the year. Payments could be stopped while leaving the account balance in the TSP. Finally, the bill would eliminate the withdrawal election deadline.

The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board, which oversees the TSP, has two years to issue regulations necessary to implement the expanded withdrawal options. While TSP participants will welcome the changes, they may need to wait up to two years to enjoy the expanded options.

OPEN SEASON FOR HEALTH INSURANCE

Open Season for FEHB is November 13 – December 11, 2017. Find information on plans is in the October 2017 narfe magazine pages 32-44 and the November narfe magazine pages 32-57.

There are also 2 webinars on choosing a health plan. One on November 30, 2017 at 1 pm CT, entitled **Health Plans: Discover Your Best Option**, which covers major coverage types, tax benefits of Health Savings Accounts and Flexible Spending Accounts. Items covered: -which plan is best for your healthcare needs, -can you take advantage of the tax savings from Savings Accounts, -evaluate your health plan step-by-step, -tips for dual federal families. The second webinar, previewed on October 26th, is available on the NARFE website. It is entitled **FEHB & Medicare: What's Best For You?** Just visit the narfe.org website and login.

Dianne Throop, Roger Lemmons, and Wendy Hambly attended the Health Fair sponsored by the

Topeka NARFE Chapter. Blue Cross Blue Shield and GEHA representatives presented plans for 2018.

We picked up some brochures and will have them at the November meeting on the 15th. Both representatives encouraged members to visit their company's websites to reap the rewards for healthy behavior. They said there is still time to collect rewards in 2017. The deadline is December 31, 2017.



Just for fun...Can you guess who these quotes are referencing?

#1 *"His primary rules were: never allow the public to cool off; never admit a fault or wrong; never concede that there may be some good in your enemy; never leave room for alternatives; never accept blame; concentrate on one enemy at a time and blame him for everything that goes wrong; people will believe a big lie sooner than a little one; and if you repeat it frequently enough people will sooner or later believe it."*

#2 *"...he was a solitary political adventurer representing no major school of political thought. His philosophy ... ranged from the banal to the fantastic and consisted of a popularized repackaging of right-wing, radical, conventional wisdom.*

"The essence of demagoguery resides in the ability to distill emotion and frustration into a single moment. Gratifying that moment and achieving a mesmeric, nearly sensual relationship with his entourage and the public at large became _____'s specialties."

1. About Hitler in 1943, by a man named Walter Langer for the Office of Strategic Services – the OSS, which was a precursor of the CIA.
2. About Hitler paragraphs from Henry Kissinger's 1994 book, "Diplomacy," (p. 289, published by Simon and Schuster).