

# “Old Trooper” Newsletter

Old “Trooper” Chapter 383, National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association, Junction City,  
Kansas 66441 February 2016

## 2016 CHAPTER OFFICERS

President: Dixie Thomas, 238-1455

1<sup>st</sup> VP: Ray Thompson, 762-5249

2<sup>nd</sup> VP: Jim Mitchell, 238-3423

Secretary: Lannie Pender, 238-6503

Treasurer: Wally Mitchell, 238-3423

### COMMITTEE

#### CHAIRPERSONS:

Legislative: Jim Dodd, 238-8041

Membership/Public Relations/Editor: Dixie Thomas, 238-1455

Service Officer: Walt Germann, 209-1938

Parliamentarian: Ray Thompson, 762-5249

Alzheimer's/Decorating: Opal Dalton, 922-6551

Sunshine: Wally Mitchell, 238-3423

NARFE-PAC: Jim Martin, 238-8539

Program: Karen Brough, 210-7420/  
Darlene Gaskins, 209-8761

Chaplain: Maxine Kroeplin

Calling: Mary Reed, 223-6203



*The National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the earned pay, retirement and health care benefits of federal employees, retirees and their survivors.*

**Happy Birthday** TO Calvin Bernard, Carolyn Cook, Helmut Holle, James Martin, Lola Brighton, Marilyn Wasyk, Sharon Griffin, and Margaret (Pat) Fisher. Many more birthdays!!

**Happy Anniversary** TO Dallas and Dorothy Luttmann and Lennie and Carole Blixt. Congratulations to you and may you have many more anniversaries.

#### **Sunshine Report (Wally Mitchell):**

Get well cards were sent to Vi Martin, Marlene Vansickle, Pat Fisher and Mary Ann Brown. We hope you are feeling better and able to get around. Sympathy cards were sent to Willadeen Kamm and Karen Baldwin's family. Our deepest sympathies and prayers to these families.

#### **Treasurer's Report (Wally Mitchell):**

Beginning balance 1 January 2016:	\$2480.84
Receipts	488.52
Expenses	714.99
Ending Balance 31 December 2015:	\$2254.37

**Secretary's Report (Lana Pender):** National Association of Active and Retired Federal Employees (NARFE) January 14, 2016, held in the 4H/Senior Center: President Dixie Thomas of Old Trooper Chapter 383, NARFE, called the January 2016 meeting to order at 11:30 a.m.

President Dixie Thomas opened the meeting at 11:30; Maxine Kroeplin led the invocation followed by the Pledge of allegiance. President Thomas extended birthday wishes and anniversary wishes to those members celebrating in the month of January. President Thomas welcomed guest Darca Ridley and new member, Ruth Linville.

President Thomas stated the Minutes are in the Newsletter, and asked for a motion and a second to approve them; a motion was made by Maxine Kroeplin seconded by Ray Thompson, motion passed. She then asked for a motion and second to accept the Treasurer's report, Ray Thompson made a motion, motion was seconded by Jim Mitchell, motion passed subject to audit.

Jim Mitchell passed sheets out; he asked that everyone that has an email address give it to us. Dixie announced that there is a celebration at the Opera House on Jan 18 2016 at 10:00 a.m. celebrating Martin Luther King Jr., there will a ceremony honoring two local Buffalo Soldiers. Dixie read the NARFE Mission Statement, she has set goals to get new members; we will visit City and Fort Riley functions to promote NARFE. Bob Norcross made a motion to accept the 2016 Budget (copies had been handed out), Carolyn Cook seconded and the motion passed. Next month the St. Xavier Children's Choir will sing, Carolyn Cook, June Buckles, Lannie Pender and Dixie will make up treat bags for them. Dixie introduced the new calling Chair person, Mary Reed, thank you Mary for stepping up. A bucket was passed to take up a collection for a gift card for Vi Martin, for her many years as Calling Chair person.

Legislative Report: Congress is back in session. Jim Dodd announced House Bill 711 amending the Windfall Elimination Provision was introduced, since it is part of the Social Security Program they can't get rid of it. The NARFE Convention is in Reno August 28 – September 1st.

Service Officer: Walt Germann is resigning as Service Officer due to medical issues.

The January speaker was Pat Silovsky, Director of the Milford Nature Center. She spoke on the Eagle Migration to Milford Lake. She gave a very informative talk. One tidbit of information was that in 1889 the Town of Lecompton was called "Bald Eagle" when it was changed to Lecompton was not mentioned. In 1989 the first pair of Eagles showed up at Milford. There is a program to band the chicks, which is not very easy. Kansas Eagles have a purple band. The Eagles continue to add to the nests as they come back to the same nests year after year. Since Eagles all look the same they are measured to determine the sex. There are now 92 nests at Milford. As of 2007, eagles are no longer on the endangered list, however, they are still protected. Eagle Days will be January 16, 2016. She provided a bus schedule. She also brought a Turkey Vulture by the name of Lurch, he was quite well behaved and this is as close as many of us have ever been to a Turkey Vulture.

There were 63 reservations and 58 in attendance. We collected \$84.00 for Alzheimer's.

Door Prizes were won by Marie Sawyer, Helmut Hoelle, Leroy Walters and Florence Whitebread.

## **NARFE'S LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

### **114<sup>th</sup> Congress Midterm (2015) Review**

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

- **The House of Representatives' Fiscal Year 2016 budget resolution contained eight provisions totaling \$318 billion in cuts to the federal community**, including raising retirement contributions of current employees, arbitrarily reducing the federal workforce, increasing enrollees' share of Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) premiums and reducing the return of the Thrift Savings Plan's (TSP) most stable investment vehicle, the G Fund. Ultimately, none of those cuts were passed into law in 2015, thanks to the hard work of NARFE and its members.

- **The Senate failed in its attempt to pay for highway improvements on the back of the federal community.** As the Senate debated a six-year highway bill, some suggested offsetting the cost by changing the rate of return of the TSP's G Fund, rendering the fund nearly worthless, as the return would be lower than the average savings account. Such a change would have cost TSP participants \$32 billion. NARFE members and lobbyists sprang into action, and Congress was forced to fund the bill by other means.

- **A budget agreement offsetting sequestration for two years did not take from federal employees or retirees.** After contributing more than \$120 billion to pay for other priorities in recent years, NARFE members have been sounding the drumbeat: Enough is enough! A two-year budget deal was signed into law, increasing spending levels by \$80 billion without offsets to the federal community, even after the initial budget called for \$318 billion in cuts.

**4 Successfully prevented a disproportionate and unfair increase in Medicare premiums.**

- **Without a COLA in 2016, millions of Medicare enrollees not held harmless would have had their premiums increased by 52 percent, unless Congress or the administration took action.** NARFE began sounding the alarm on this issue before any other organization. Due to NARFE's lobbying efforts and the messages sent to legislators by thousands of NARFE members, a compromise fix was included in the two-year budget agreement. Premiums for those not held harmless increased only by the amount they would have gone up, had there been a COLA.

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

• NARFE testified before the Department of Labor in favor of a rule to hold financial advisers to a “best interest” standard, instead of the current “suitability” standard, when providing advice regarding rollovers. Speaking for NARFE, National President Richard G. Thissen’s testimony focused on NARFE’s concern that federal employees and retirees and military personnel who are invested in low-fee TSP funds are not adequately protected from bad financial advice. Because rollovers are not covered by the existing definition of fiduciary investment advice, financial advisers may legally recommend that account holders roll over their TSP holdings into an IRA, where the money could be invested in mutual funds providing the same, or essentially similar, products at a much higher cost. If finalized, the rule should result in better investments and, therefore, lead to greater returns on the hard-earned retirement savings of millions of Americans. Congressional efforts to stop or delay the rule have failed thus far.

#### 4 Worked to protect and inform NARFE members following the data breaches at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM)

• Following the announcements of two OPM data breaches, NARFE has stayed in constant communication with OPM officials to ensure NARFE members have the information they need to protect their financial wellbeing. NARFE immediately created a website to provide answers to members’ questions. NARFE also testified on Capitol Hill, stressing: “It is imperative that we not only act swiftly to remedy this situation, but we must also ensure an incident of this magnitude does not repeat itself. We must do a better job of protecting the millions of federal employees who serve this nation.”

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

• NARFE supports lifetime identity theft protection, while the services offered after the breaches cover only 18 months and three years. In the FY16 omnibus appropriations bill, those affected were awarded 10 total years of coverage. While not the lifetime coverage NARFE advocated, it’s a notable improvement.

#### 4 NARFE’s media coverage reaches new heights

• In 2015, NARFE saw unprecedented coverage in the press, thanks to a combination of being out in front on certain issues, and efforts to draw attention to other concerns that were being overlooked by the media. On topics as wide-ranging as the Medicare Part B issue, the new Self Plus One option and the OPM data breaches, NARFE was mentioned in the press more than 750 times in 2015. NARFE also garnered more coverage in national news outlets, including [CBS Evening News](#), on which NARFE’s legislative director appeared, and [Fox Business News](#), on which NARFE’s legislative counsel appeared.

## KANSAS’ FEDERAL FAMILY

		<b>Employees</b>
Employee Annuitants	19,803	
Survivor Annuitants	5,107	Agriculture 914
Total Annuitants on Roll	24,910	Commerce 191
Monthly Annuities (\$000s)	7,345	Defense (FR) 6,817
Active Federal Employees	15,971	Justice 368
U.S. Postal Service Employees	6,341	Labor 63
Total Active and Retired Federal and Postal Employees	47,222	Energy and Education 0
		State 0
		Health and Human Services 217
		Interior 397
		Transportation 800
		Treasury 147
		Veterans Affairs 4,660
		Non Cabinet agencies 979 (EPA/SSA)

### Hotline Message: February 5, 2016

Hotline Message: February 5, 2016 \_\_\_\_\_ Message from NARFE President Richard G. Thissen

“This week, senators took another look at the data breaches at the Office of Personnel Management as they held a hearing on the nomination of Beth Cobert to be the new director of OPM. Also this week, NARFE joined with Federally Employed Women to support paid parental leave, and the House continued its attempts to undermine the Department of Labor’s efforts to improve protections for retirement savers.

“Next week, President Obama will submit to Congress his final budget (for fiscal year 2017), which is expected to include a federal pay raise proposal.”

-Committee Holds Hearing for Nomination of Beth Cobert as OPM Director

-On Thursday, February 4, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee held a hearing to consider Beth F. Cobert to be director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Cobert has been serving as the acting director since Katherine Archuleta

resigned as director in July, not long after OPM announced its data systems had been breached. Between OPM'S two security breaches, 22.1 million federal employees, federal retirees, contractors, job applicants and others had their personal data compromised. Cobert has been dealing with the aftermath of these breaches.

-While there was high praise from senators for Cobert, she was questioned about OPM's handling of the data breaches and what the agency will do to improve relations with Congress and strengthen cybersecurity.

-The hearing came a day after House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman Jason Chaffetz, R-UT, issued a subpoena for more documents relating to the breaches.

-DOD Changes Family Leave Policy; NARFE Urges Congress to Pass FEPLA

-NARFE, in partnership with Federally Employed Women (FEW), issued a joint press release after Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter announced on January 28 that the Department of Defense (DOD) is increasing paid maternity leave to 12 weeks for women in all branches of the armed forces. In the press release, NARFE National President Richard G. Thissen and FEW National President Michelle Crockett applauded DOD's initiative and urged Congress to follow the Pentagon's lead and pass paid parental leave legislation for federal employees.

-The Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act (FEPLA), H.R. 532 in the House (introduced by Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-NY) and S. 2033 in the Senate (introduced by Sens. Brian Schatz, D-HI, and Barbara Mikulski, D-MD), would provide six weeks of paid leave to federal employees for the birth, adoption or foster placement of a child. NARFE has long advocated for federal paid parental leave, saying it would help the government retain good employees and recruit top talent.

-Thissen noted that the United States is the only industrialized country that does not offer its civil service employees any paid time off after the birth or adoption of a child. "Offering paid parental leave also is about competing with other employers," he said. "Increasingly, we are seeing private-sector companies offering paid parental leave, and without its own policy in place, the federal government will not be able to attract and retain the top-level employees it needs," he concluded.

NARFE supports FEPLA and asks NARFE members to send this letter urging their lawmakers to cosponsor this legislation or thank them if they have already done so.

-House Committees Approve Bills That Would Undermine Protections for Retirement Advice

-This week, two bills, H.R. 4263 and H.R. 4264, were approved by the House Education and the Workforce Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee, clearing them for consideration by the full House of Representatives. The bills are misleadingly named the "Affordable Retirement Advice Protection Act" and the "Strengthening Access to Valuable Education and Retirement Support (SAVERS) Act," respectively.

-While the bills' supporters describe them as an alternative to the Department of Labor's (DOL) conflict of interest rulemaking, both bills would weaken rather than strengthen already inadequate consumer protections afforded by current outdated regulations. NARFE opposes the bills, and signed a coalition letter expressing its opposition, [here](#).

Both bills would prevent the DOL rule, which NARFE supports, from going into effect. The DOL rule would amend the definition of "fiduciary investment advice" under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) to ensure individuals saving for retirement are protected by a "best interest standard" when receiving investment advice. Under current regulations, the best interest standard does not apply to advice given on a one-time basis, advice regarding rollovers, or any advice on investing in an individual retirement account (IRA).

-NARFE has been particularly concerned that federal employees and retirees invested in low-fee Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) funds – the federal government's version of a 401(k) for federal civilian employees and military personnel – currently have inadequate legal recourse if they rely on bad or conflicted investment advice regarding their TSP holdings.

-NARFE Members Encouraged to Ask the Presidential Candidates a Question

-Here is a great opportunity for NARFE members to get their questions answered by the presidential candidates. The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO), of which NARFE is a member, is sponsoring a "Seniors Decide Forum" for the major party candidates on February 17 at George Mason University in Arlington, VA. More information can be found [here](#).

-NARFE members are encouraged to record a short video (by smartphone, iPad, etc.) posing their question to the candidates. Send your video [tolcao@ncpssm.org](mailto:tolcao@ncpssm.org). Providing your video through this email will constitute permission for posting on the Seniors Decide website.

-Governors Deliver State of the State Addresses, Set Legislative Agenda

-Thirty-seven governors have delivered or released an annual State of the State Address since early January. A few more are in the offing. These speeches play a major role in setting the legislative agenda, including tax changes. There are several ways you can listen to your governor's address including through Multistate Associates, which provides a link to either the transcript or website with streaming video; C-SPAN's Video Library, which has at least 20 of these speeches ranging from 25 to 66 minutes; and the National Governors Association, which provides a gateway to 55 state and territorial governors where you can request regular updates. Alternatively, if you would like these resources emailed to you, you can contact NARFE's State Advocacy analyst at [cfarrell@narfe.org](mailto:cfarrell@narfe.org).