



# Virginia Federation of NARFE

## Fall 2021 Newsletter



### VFN Executive Board

President - Dr. Constance C. Bails, Ph.D  
Presidentbails@vanarfe.org

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President – Robert Martin  
Bobmartin1124@gmail.com

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President – Frances Boatman

Secretary – Esther Nash

Treasurer – Thomas Rasche

Immediate Past President – Leslie Ravenell

## IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



### 2021 - "ZOOMING INTO THE FUTURE"

First, please let me say that it has been a pleasure and an honor to serve as the President of the Virginia Federation of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (VFN) for the past two- and one-half years. It has also been a challenge to manage such a prestigious organization during such uncertainty caused by the overwhelming COVID 19 Pandemic. But, with the tremendous support from the VFN Executive Team and the highly talented Board of Directors, we have been able to accomplish the goals and objectives that we set forth for our association. In addition, we have been remarkably successful in tapping into the vast network of resources from our membership who participated and led the committees and special programs that we put in place during the past two- and one-half years. For this, I say, thank you Virginia Federation of NARFE! Yes, during the Pandemic, we faced many obstacles. However, we managed to conduct all board and committee meetings virtually via

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our Zoom Program initially. When the Governor of Virginia and the CDC lifted the prohibition, we held our board meetings in person.

Also, because of the COVID19, we had to cancel our 2020 VFN Conference. When things did calm down, we revised and issued Bulletin # 1 announcing the Conference with adjusted conference dates and renegotiated the contract for April 2021.

When we were able to reschedule the Conference, the resurgence of the Pandemic in the state caused us to postpone the rescheduled 2021 VFN Conference again, keeping in mind that we have always put the health and safety of our members first!

Finally, we were able to honor our commitment and present our 2021 Conference from October 10 thru October 13, 2021, that was an extremely successful VFN 2021 Conference through arduous work by the award-winning 2020/2021 VFN Conference Committee.

**The 2021 VFN Conference** opened with a beautiful presentation from the Chesterfield County Sheriff's Department Honor Guards, followed by the singing of The National Anthem and Musical Selections by Chesterfield County's Musician Mr. Martin Street.

We received a written letter of greetings from Richmond's Mayor, Levar Stoney, a welcome note from Joseph P Casey, Ph.D., County Administrator, and a hearty in-person welcome by the Chesterfield County Board of Directors, Chair Mr. James Holland.

We offered a special thank you to the Midlothian Chapter 2265 for taking the lead in coordinating many of the activities and guests that made the Conference a smooth officious success.

**Opening Keynote speaker**, Senator Warner (video), provided an encouraging presentation on the direction and the initiatives of the State of Virginia. He also explained that there is movement on some of the issues presented in our 2021 State Legislative Plan. Following his video, his Outreach Representative from Richmond, Randy Moore, followed up with encouraging remarks.

From National NARFE Headquarters, our Keynote Speaker was Ms. Barbara Sido, Executive Director, on the state of affairs of NARFE, with time for questions and answers that the members greatly appreciated. Also from Headquarters was a legislative update delivered by Ms. Marsha Padilla-Goad, NARFE's Grassroots Program Manager. Both presentations were via video.

**Special Guest** - In-person guest speakers included An Opioid Crisis presentation from the Director of Outreach, Office of the Virginia Attorney General.

**Subject Matter Experts** presented forums on Downsizing; Wills and Trust; Estate & Financial Planning, Life Alert for Seniors, and Elder Scams.

We were able to conduct the business of the Virginia Federation and Area Caucus Meetings for all the various chapters to conduct Area business and vote for new area vice presidents. We selected a 2022 nominating committee with primary and alternates to serve on behalf of the VFN.

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**General Workshops** allowed everyone to share ideas, meet new members, see old friends, and add to their knowledge and skills. The workshop topics included the following topics:

New Members & First Timers - Training for new chapter officers - Intro to Parliamentary Procedures Transitioning to Retirement Community - NES NARFE's Data Base Systems - Conducting Effective Chapter Meetings - Photography 101 - Downsizing a Major Change - Social Media - iPhone Photography (What's your North Star)

Program Committee Meetings and Training also included specialized training for the chapters program chairs and all attendees were encouraged to attend:

Area Vice Presidents (Current & Former)  
Alzheimer's – Membership - National Legislation - Public Relations  
Service - State Legislation

### VIRGINIA FEDERATION PRESIDENTS

We are pleased that we had six past presidents, our current President, and the Region X Area Vice President to be a part of the Conference this year! Top row: Richard Giangerelli (Dulles), Ann Collins, (Springfield), Constance T. Bails Ph.D., (Fairfax) Luther Santiful (Shenandoah County), bottom row: Kathy Arpa, (Vienna-Oakton), William "Bill" Shackelford (Fairfax), and Leslie Ravenell (Colonial Beach).



This year the VFN enhanced our newly revived Training Program.

We host monthly training classes, currently via zoom on a variety of topics. We will soon restart hosting various officer and information training in person across the State of Virginia to present updates on VFN Programs and activities, including National and State Legislative political updates.

Under our Electronic Communication Committee, our new and improved website using WordPress, the software currently used for the new National NARFE website, is up and successfully running. It encompasses marketing, membership, and communications. If technology is your thing and you would like to become a part of the team, don't hesitate to contact Chairperson Debbie Fisk. The team has great ideas and plans to expand our website. We also successfully developed a procedure for returning 100 members erroneously placed in National only status. Virginia NARFE members were successfully returned to the chapters of choice, thanks to the partnership of VFN and the National Membership Team. We were excited to support the NARFE National Legislative Conference (LEGcon21) and 100th Anniversary Gala. LEGcon21 was held June 21-23, and the GALA held on the evening of June 21, 18 members from VA participated. Most importantly, during this Pandemic, when our chapters were unable to meet in person, we secured Zoom Licenses to make electronic zoom meetings available to every VFN Area in our Virginia Federation to use by each Chapter, coordinated via your AREA VP and Designated Zoom Coordinator(s). We have conducted zoom training every week since November 2020, and it is still ongoing and available to all VFN members. We will continue to offer zoom and zoom-related training to every VFN chapter member until all members who choose to learn the zoom system are well versed in using and hosting zoom for their respective chapters and committee meetings. We continue to assist in hosting any chapters that need our assistance. To date, our Chapters and the Board of Directors are meeting in person; we will continue to have the zoom usage available for all who desire to use it as a stand-alone or in addition for those who still do

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not choose or are unable to leave home. Zoom is easy to access, easy to use, and a safe electronic application. To sign up for classes, please send an email to the VFN Net-Coordinator [jbails@aol.com](mailto:jbails@aol.com) or call him at 571-220-2860.

Our Virginia Federation of NARFE Training initiatives is running full steam ahead, as you all probably know. We have trained hundreds of VFN members since the inception of the VFN Electronic Communication Committee and the Training Committees. Zoom's electronic Virtual initiative has enabled us to conduct our chapters, Areas, Board of directors, and committee meetings with remarkable success. We have members who never believed that they could become users of virtual resources, such as members who have become hosts and co-hosts via zoom for VFN business. If your Chapter is interested in conducting zoom meetings, our Electronic Communication Committee is ready, willing, and able to provide training and host your meetings. All who desire can take advantage of such incredible virtual training and meeting opportunities at the expense of the VFN. It is only an email or a phone call away.

We are incredibly excited that so many National Only NARFE members are responding to our emails and attended our Zoom Training and VFN Conference in October 2021. Usually, what you may hear about joining NARFE is that you can join National Only or chapters. But the Federation is comprised of the chapters, areas, and National Only members. Hopefully, we will continue to bridge the gap and all members who live in the State of Virginia. And we understand that we are not either-or, but we can function together and support the goals and objectives of NARFE to safeguard our benefits.

VA NARFE is continually working to keep our goals and mission at the forefront. We are constantly trying to enhance our efforts to protect the earned entitlements, rights, and benefits of Active and Retired Federal employees, their families, and survivors. We strive to unite, work and vote on issues concerning our benefits. We have a two-person Public Relations Team to help us publicize that VA NARFE is alive and well! Our priorities are to constantly develop and improve our programs within our federal community, NARFE leadership, and infinity partners.

Also noteworthy is that we take pride in recognizing our outstanding members; e.g., Gaston Gianni received the Management Award for Outstanding Leadership. Luther Santiful was presented an award for years of exceptional service to the VA Federation of NARFE. Leslie Ravenell received the President's Choice Award for dedicated support. Certificates of Appreciation were issued to Bill Martin, Karen Cheatwood, and Jim Little for their service.

This year we awarded the Management Award for Outstanding Leadership to Electronic Communication Committee Chairperson Debbie Fisk, Midlothian, and the President's Choice Award presented to Francis Boatman, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President and Chairperson for the VFN Membership Program. We also issued a certificate of appreciation and gifts of gratitude to the 2021 VFN Conference Committee.

A Job Well Done! I would like to recognize the VFN Net Coordinator, John D. Bails, who has managed VFN Data Base information and coordination, graphics for various programs, Coordinator of the Zoom License Program, Assistant ECC Chairperson, and a facilitator for zoom training on behalf of the VFN. John served as the Facilities Manager, sergeant of arms, and assistance conference book coordinator for the 2021 VFN Conference Program Book.



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Finally, let me say that it has been an experience and an immense pleasure to serve as the President of the Virginia Federation of NARFE. Yes, there were challenges because of the COVID-19 Pandemic. But I am proud that the VFN Team made it work because of the professionalism and dedication of the members of the Board and chapter volunteers that allowed us to succeed with such remarkable success.

Equally delightful is passing the Gavel to our first Vice President, Robert "Bob" Martin. I am optimistic that he will continue with the past initiatives that we worked on together. He will add his insights and experience to continue VANARFE, "Zooming into the Future." I wish him and his Board the best of luck and success. I am happy to become the Immediate Past President. Upon his request, I will fulfill my duties and responsibilities as an advisor to the President to the best of my ability!



Forever Grateful!

Constance T, Bails, Ph.D.  
VFN Immediate Past President



## EDITOR'S NOTE

To keep you informed about what is happening in NARFE Chapters in Virginia, the VFN newsletter is now published in the spring and fall. This newsletter covers the period of May-October 2021 and includes a recap of our very successful 2021 VFN Conference, which was held in October. Kudos to the committee.

Our spring newsletter was published in June 2021. You can read it on our new website at [www.vanarfe.org](http://www.vanarfe.org)

Happy Holidays.

Kathy Arpa, VFN Newsletter Editor  
[mkarpa@hotmail.com](mailto:mkarpa@hotmail.com)

## Inside This Issue

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### MESSAGE FROM THE FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

The Area Vice Presidents (AVPs) came together on several Zoom meetings and at the June and October Federation Board meetings. During the Conference in October, I held a breakout session with the attending AVPs, and several issues were discussed.

Elections were held at the Conference and AVPs for all areas were elected, and I am pleased to report that those in the AVP positions as incumbents and as acting were elected to serve again except for Area VIII which will hold a post conference meeting to select a new Area Vice President.

During this reporting period, I hosted several Zoom meetings as the Conference Committee Chair. Meetings were held monthly and then weekly after the end of August until the Conference. The Conference went very well but due to the Delta variant of COVID, only half of the registrants attended. A "Lessons Learned" Zoom meeting was held on October 28<sup>th</sup> which included discussion of ideas for the April 2022 Annual Meeting and the April 2023 Conference.

On October 13, 2021, during the Conference, I was elected VFN President by acclamation. Also elected by acclamation were Esther Nash as Secretary and Thomas Rachele as Treasurer. There will be an election for First Vice President between Public Relations Program Chair Doris McAdams and Nominating Committee Chair "Larry" McIlwee.

The first event I attended as VFN President was the Northern Virginia NARFE Chapters Caucus which was held at Fairfax, VA on October 29, 2021.

Robert (Bob) Martin

### MESSAGE FROM THE SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

The past six months have seen a whirlwind of activity. Our Program Chairs are very dedicated, hard-working NARFE members who have gone 'above and beyond' to maintain the momentum of their programs and keep our members informed, despite a continuing pandemic. Monthly meetings are held via Zoom to discuss Program status, highlights, outreach to Chapters, and future program plans. Videos prepared by each Program Chair have been posted on VFN's Facebook page, with more to follow. Communications, reports, meetings, and training with the Chapter counterparts are ongoing. Everyone went the extra mile to prepare for the VFN Conference, which was a huge success.

Participation in the following meetings has been most beneficial in understanding and performing my duties as VFN 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: quarterly VFN Board, monthly 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President/AVPs, State Legislative planning, Electronic Communications Committee, Conference Committee, and Training Committee, as well as all the very informative training sessions via Zoom.

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The Program Chairs' individual Newsletter articles highlight their accomplishments. I am very proud to serve with these dedicated, hardworking individuals – please extend a well-deserved 'Thank you' to each of them.

Alzheimer's - Donna Shackelford

National Legislative - Gaston Gianni

State Legislative - Deborah Fisk

Public Relations - Doris McAdams

Service Officer - Arlene Arthur

Electronic Communications Committee - Deborah Fisk

Plans for the future are to continue with the monthly Program Chairs Meetings, become more interactive with the individual Chapter leaders, and to plan/continue training for the chapter counterparts. Feel free to contact me if I can be of assistance in any way.

"Together we will succeed."

Frances E. Boatman

### NEWS FROM VFN PROGRAM CHAIRS

#### ALZHEIMER'S

The best news I can give you this month is that NARFE has met its challenge of collecting \$14 million for Alzheimer's Research. This is more than a year ahead of the projection and is the result of a large gift from our own Federation to put us over the goal. We now have a new goal of \$15 million by the end of 2023. It is an ambitious target but knowing the NARFE members in Virginia I am sure we can achieve it.

I want to give you the results of our fundraising at the recent VFN conference. We collected a total of \$1,444.00 with \$847.00 coming from the silent auction. We had 16 wonderful baskets again this year, and I want to thank all the chapters who provided them and the individuals who bid on them. The big fiesta basket yielded \$100, and I'm sure Woodbridge Chapter 1270 is proud of their efforts. We were able to draw tickets during the business session for a total of \$400 given back to our members, and we had \$597 raised in tickets and donations that I am sending to Chicago with the silent auction proceeds for credit to Virginia. Since we had approximately 1/3 of the attendance as normal, I am very proud of a total fund of approximately 1/2 of the normal proceeds.

You should also know the benefit of your donations and gifts. One full grant and one partial grant were awarded by the National NARFE Committee for Alzheimer's when they met in September 2021. The Committee had \$278,126.78 that had been collected during the 2021 Fiscal Year. Pablo Martinez Contreras, Ph.D., was given the full grant of \$175,000. He is an investigator at Indiana University at Bloomington, Indiana, and he is exploring the role of Bassoon in tau pathophysiology and propagation. Bassoon is a protein that has a relationship with tau. Researchers learned that when they reduced the activity of Bassoon in Alzheimer's-like mice, the accumulation of tau decreased in their brains. The study results may help understand the biological mechanisms by which abnormal tau accumulates and is transported in the brain in Alzheimer's and other tauopathies. The study could reveal a potentially new therapeutic target for abnormal tau-related brain diseases, including Alzheimer's.

A partial grant of \$103,126.78 was made to Yi-Chen Hsieh, Ph.D., from Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts. She and her team wish to discover how the clearance of nerve cell waste may be associated with brain changes observed in Alzheimer's. Studies show that the "proteasome" a part of a cell's structure that functions like garbage disposal and removes unwanted proteins, may not function properly in Alzheimer's. The study results may help understand how the clearance of cellular waste may be associated with brain changes observed in Alzheimer's. If success, the findings may provide potentially therapeutic strategies to improve proteasome activity in Alzheimer's.

I think this is all very exciting news and gives us a lot of hope for a cure to this awful disease sooner rather than later. We have a medication now that seems to slow the progress of Alzheimer's in the early stages. That is a great start. Now I will request that you contact your congressmen and request them to legislate to control the cost of such an important treatment. An improvement is good only when it can be used.

Remember that I have a lot of information available, and I am more than willing to share it with chapters or individuals to effect understanding of the disease. Please feel free to call me or to request me to speak to your meeting, either virtually or in person.

Donna Shackelford, Alzheimer's Chair  
14429 Round Lick Lane  
Centreville, VA 20120  
kamiahan@aol.com

### MEMBERSHIP

The past few months have been very busy and full of interesting opportunities for Membership.

**Monthly Membership Gain/Loss Reports** are posted on VFN Membership web page and sent to Membership Chairs with recommendations to contact prospective new members and non-renewals. Forms and sample correspondence are also posted on the VFN Membership web page. Thanks to Stan Palen and Deborah Fisk.

**Video prepared and posted on VFN Facebook page.**



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**Attended:** Weekly Zoom Training

Monthly Program Chair Meetings

Quarterly VFN Board Meetings

National Executive Board Meeting via Zoom

Chapter 737 Meeting via Zoom

Chapter 1270 Meeting via Zoom with Dave Bowman, NARFE Membership Development

Northern Virginia Caucus Meeting via Zoom

**Chapter Membership Chairs Meetings/Training:** Conducted via Zoom on May 20<sup>th</sup> and July 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Outreach:** Chapter 2343 Falls Run requested help with a Zoom Membership Drive for their Falls Run Community. Zoom meeting was held July 21 with Falls Run and VFN Board members. Luncheon meeting is planned as soon as Falls Run Community is open to outsiders. Leslie Ravenell is coordinating.

Responded to numerous requests from Membership Chairs regarding access to the M-112, transfer of members, reinstatement of Life members, dues, listings of deceased members, errors in transfers, Membership Gain/Loss Reports, etc. Reached out to Headquarters when needed to resolve situation.

**Membership Workshop at VFN Conference** - Conducted Workshop for Membership Chairs and interested members. Folders containing NARFE brochures, applications, and membership supplies, along with pages on Membership Chair Responsibilities, Navigating the NARFE Member Portal, Resources, and Instructions on Accessing NARFE Chapter Reports was given each attendee.

**Membership Chairs Day of Training/Planning** – Two sessions are being planned. VFN will furnish Lunch.

Areas I – IV – Meeting in Williamsburg. Marilyn Riddle and Jean Garrison are finding a location for the meeting.

Areas VII – X – Meeting in Richmond – date and location to be determined.

**Awards - Thank you for your dedication to Membership:**

- Member recruiting highest number of new members from July 1 – September 30.

Marilyn Riddle, 0685 Williamsburg recruited Vanessa Trent, Wayne Webb, 0180 Winchester recruited Richard Hoover, Mary Sinisi, 1757 Middle Peninsula-Gloucester recruited Wendy Hoppe and Kathy Arpa, 1116 Vienna recruited I.D. Wilson – a four-way tie. Each awarded a Certificate of Appreciation.

- Membership Chair whose chapter recruits largest percentage of Prospects as New Members

Gary Robison, 1549 Fauquier – two Prospects and three New Members. Awarded Certificate of Appreciation.

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- Membership Chair whose chapter reinstates largest percentage of members. Roy Beasley, 28 Petersburg - 2 Reinstated and 0 Dropped Members. Awarded Certificate of Appreciation and reimbursement of Conference Registration.

**Presentation at Seminar** – Recently, I was given the opportunity to make a presentation on NARFE and its benefits to a seminar with Human Resource officers representing over 3,000 federal employees. Hopefully, we will have some new members joining us soon.

**2021 Membership Drive** continues through December 31 - Recruiters are awarded \$10 for each new member they recruit. Be sure you add your membership ID number to the new member application. (Your ID number is on your NARFE magazine mailing label.) Please participate in this important effort.

As of October 30, there are 5,330 Chapter members and 6,140 National members - a total of 11,470.

To make certain our voices are heard by Congress to protect the pay and earned benefits of all current and retired federal employees, we need to strive to increase membership. Please get involved in this important effort. If your chapter has suggestions, questions, or would like help with a membership drive, please contact me at feboatman@live.com.

“Together we will succeed.”

**Frances E. Boatman, VFN Membership Chair**

### NATIONAL LEGISLATION

Special Thanks to the VFN National Legislation Team members for a very productive six months. As shown in the following Notes article, you are doing great work to advance NARFE’s Legislative priorities. Thank you for all your efforts in attending conferences, working with Virginia’s Congressional Delegation to obtain cosponsors for NARFE’s priority legislation and attending events to build and strengthen our relations with our Senators and Representatives.

#### **NARFE National Legislative Conference**

NARFE’s 2021 National Legislation Conference was held on June 21-23, 2021. With financial support of the VFN, 10 members of our 13 person VFN National Legislation team were able to attend this year’s virtual conference and participated on June 26 in NARFE’s virtual Advocacy Day with 12 of VA’s 13 Congressional Delegation Offices. Representatives Cline (District 6) and Spanberger (District 7) attended the virtual meetings. Virginia had a total of 18 NARFE members attend the conference, most of whom participated in the June Advocacy Day zoom Hill meetings. I believe we were successful in carrying NARFE’s 2021 Legislative priorities to our VA congressional delegation and thanking those who had already signed on as sponsors or cosponsors to the bills supporting the NARFE legislative priorities **and asking** the others to sign on as cosponsors to the bill if they had yet to sign on.

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### NARFE's Advocacy Day and August Advocacy Month Priorities--- Cosponsors as of 10-25-21

These are the NARFE Priorities we carried to the Hill and the members of the VA congressional delegation who had signed on as cosponsors. Since the June Legislative Conference, we have obtained seven additional cosponsors.

More needs to be done! NARFE members (both Chapter members and VA National Members)

consider contacting your Representative and Senators to ASK for their support in cosponsoring these bills.

Don't forget to THANK those who have already cosponsored!!

**1) Repeal of WEP & GPO HR 82- Social Security Fairness Act, Introduced by Rep Rodney Davis (R) MA.**

**VA cosponsors: 7-- REPs Spanberger; Luria, Wittman, Connolly, McEachin, Scott & Beyer.**

(233- Cosponsors) 48,700 Federal annuitants in Virginia are impacted by WEP!!

**S 1302-Social Security Fairness Act Introduced by Senator Sherrod Brown (D) No VA Cosponsors**

(35 Cosponsors)

**2) Reform WEP & GPO HR 2337-Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act, Introduced by Richard Neal (D) MA, VA Cosponsors: 5—REPs Beyer; Spanberger; Luria; Connolly; Wexton**

**(180 cosponsors)**

**3) Postal Service Reform Act of 2021**

**HR 3076 Issue: Need to determine what impact the bill would have on Federal Employees Health Benefits BEFORE considering to passing this bill. Introduced by Rep Carolyn Maloney (D) NY.**

**VA cosponsor 1; Rep Gerry Connolly (88 Cosponsors)**

**S 1720- Introduced by Senator Gary Peters (D) MI; VA Cosponsors: 1-- Kaine (27 Cosponsors)**

**Issue: Need to determine what impact the bill would have on Federal Employees Health Benefits BEFORE considering to passing this bill.**

**4) Fair COLA for Seniors Act (HR 4315) Issue: Use CPI-E (Which better represents cost of the elderly) Introduced by Rep Garamendi (D) CA; Virginia Cosponsors 1 – Beyer (42 cosponsors)**

**5) HR 304 Equal COLA Act (Treat FERS fairly and equally with other COLA recipients Introduced by Gerry Connolly (D) VA; Virginia Cosponsors: 2---Wexton & Luria (27 cosponsors)**

**6) House Resolution 131- To recognize NARFE's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Introduced by Rep Gerry Connolly (D)**

**VA; Virginia cosponsors 5: Reps Wexton, Wittman, Luria, Beyer & Cline (19 cosponsors)**

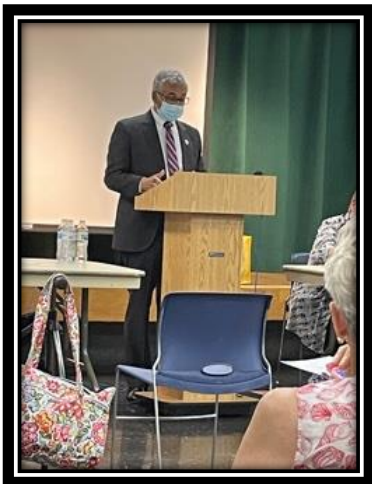
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## VFN 2021 Conference “ZOOM TO THE FUTURE”

We had eight members of the VFN National Legislative Team in attendance—one SLL & seven CDLs. The National Legislative Team was recognized in the conference program book (Outstanding Book—well done Mary Heck and team!) In addition, the Team was acknowledged from the stage before the conference attendees.

We had a NARFE PAC table set up at the conference and accepted PAC contributions. Thirteen people made a contribution, of which two were new sustainers. In total we collected \$821. Thank you to all how have contributed to this year’s NARFE PAC Fund!

## CDLs Out and About

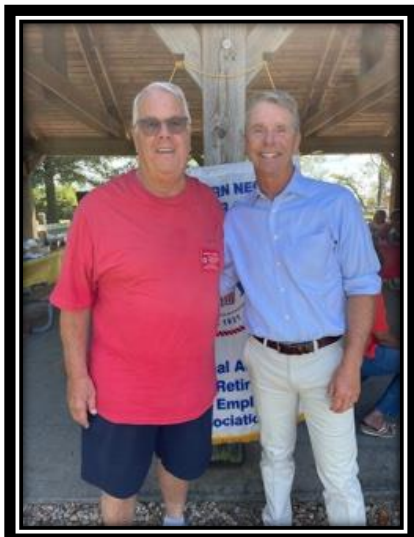


Congressman Bobby Scott spoke at Peninsula Chapter 682 meeting on August 5<sup>th</sup>.

Ray Orland, 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District CDL, and Gaston Gianni, VFN National Legislative Chair, were in attendance.



Congressman Rob Wittman spoke at Northern Neck Chapter 1823 meeting on September 7.



VFN FN National Legislative Chair and CDL for the 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District Gaston Gianni with Congressman Wittman.

VFN President Connie Bails (right) and 4<sup>th</sup> Congressional District CDL Deborah Fisk (left) with Congressman Donald McEachin at his birthday celebration. NARFE PAC sponsored attendance.



## **PAC Fund Update**

Total VA NARFE PAC Contributions for the 2021-22 cycle through September 30, 2021, \$60,663. Contributions were from 1,040 members and included a total of 43 monthly sustainer givers. The breakout between VA NARFE Chapters Members and VA National members is as follows:

- Chapter members: 534 contributors, \$35,379.00, 35 sustainers
- National only: 506 contributors, \$25,284.00, eight sustainers

## **Let's keep up the good work! PAC funds are important and will be even more important as we enter the 2022 elections.**

Through September 30, 2021, \$15,500 had been distributed to the VA Congressional Delegation as follows: Representatives Luria, (\$3,000); Scott (\$1,000); McEachin (\$1,500); Spanberger (\$1,000); Beyer (\$1,000); Wexton (\$3,000); and Connolly (\$5,000).

All of the NARFE PAC information is available to NARFE members on the NARFE web site ([www.NARFE.org](http://www.NARFE.org)) in the ADVOCACY section.

## **CLOSING QUOTE:**

“Coming together is a START. Keeping together is PROGRESS. Working together is SUCCESS.” James Crook

*Gaston Gianni, VFN National Legislative Chair*

## **STATE LEGISLATION**

My first thought is to extend a huge **THANK YOU** to everyone who came together and became part of our 2021 Legislative Planning Team. The group was significant in numbers and offered a varied spectrum of experience. We met several times online and followed up with an in-person luncheon/business session. For a first timer, everyone was patient as I navigated uncertain waters and I feel like I came through the process with a great deal of knowledge and a better understanding as to how I can provide the best leadership as your State Legislative Chair.

Our conversations were lively, thought provoking and with the varied experience at our table, we believe we developed a 2022 State Legislative Plan that we were proud to present to the Board of Directors. As expected, it was presented to the Board in July and with one amendment it passed with “flying colors.”

Our plan can be found on the website: <https://www.vanarfe.org/state-legislation>. I hope you will visit that page and look over the information. If you see something you like, let me know; however, if there is something missing or should be corrected, that is useful information as well.

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Our Goals for 2022:

- Exempting a Segment of CSRS Pensions Equivalent to Social Security Retirement
- Age Deduction – Allow the \$12,000 deduction to all individuals 65 and older
- Minimum Nursing Home Standards
- Family Care Giver Tax Credit
- Income Subtraction for Retiree Health Insurance Premiums
- Global Warming/Carbon Emissions
- Allow Virginia Tax Filers to Itemize Even If the Federal Standard Deduction is Used

The traditional Trifold brochure was printed and distributed to everyone at our Annual Conference 2021. Copies were distributed to the Area Vice President's for distribution to the Chapters. I hope you will take full advantage of the digital copies of the brochure and reserve the paper copies for delivery to your Representatives. Those copies will do better for our cause if we can put them in the hands of your Representative or their staff personnel.

THE VFN PAC was established several years ago to provide a source of funds to support candidates in the General Assembly who support the VFN position on various state issues. Learn more about the VFN PAC and become involved.

Did you know that State PAC Funds can be sent in any time of the year? There is a form on the same page as above to download the form. Fill it out, attach your check and forward to Thomas Rachele, VFN Treasurer. His information is on the form.

As we march on and carry our "ASKS" to our elected Representatives, as they ask for our vote, we ask that they support our initiatives. So fellow VFN members, grab a Trifold and plan to visit your Senator and your Delegate.

***Debbie Fisk, State Legislative Chair***

### **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Some of our chapters are now meeting in person. Those that are meeting in person have been busy. Fairfax had a picnic as well as collected food. In June I attended the Colonial Beach Chapter's celebration of NARFE's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

I attended the VFN legislative planning committee meeting. At this meeting we decided what legislation we would support. More about that elsewhere in this newsletter. `

In October, I participated in the Alzheimer's walk with the Manassas and Woodbridge Chapters.

I helped with the planning of the VFN conference and attended the event. We had speakers on fraud, COVID-19, social security, estate planning, the opioid crisis, elder scams and life alert for seniors and many others. The conference was a success. Hope more of you will attend the next one.

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Please visit us on social media and share our posts on your social media accounts. Please, send pictures and copy of activities you are having or have had. I look forward to promoting your activities. I am available to assist you with promoting your chapters. Also, the Electronics Committee and the Training Committee holds training each month on using social media and our new web page among other topics. I led one on social media.

[\(10\) Virginia Federation NARFE | Facebook](#)

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**Doris McAdams, Public Relations Chair**

### SERVICE

The last six months have continued to be challenging. And yes, we're still talking about and living with Covid-19 restrictions. Last year I started emailing monthly newsletters to Chapter Service Officers and Chapter Presidents. The purpose of the newsletter was to stay connected and to provide information that is educationally beneficial for Service Officers and, hence, our overall chapter membership.

In January I started a series on Life's Events as defined by OPM. Those 11 events affect benefits for you, your spouse and/or your children. By addressing a few events each month, the series was completed in the July Service Officer Connection.

As we strive to move on from the restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic many of us have started getting Covid-19 vaccinations. And some are now getting booster shots. The vaccines are our most powerful tool to stop the spread of COVID-19. Federal Blue Cross Blue Shield is offering a \$50 incentive for getting at least one dose by December 31, 2021. Eligible FEP Blue members can earn \$50 on their MyBlue® Wellness Card when they submit their vaccination record before the end of the year.

In the July Service Officer Connection, I asked our Service Officers if they were aware of any other insurers in the FEHB Plan network that were offering any vaccination incentives. I received a response from **Jeff Rau, Chapter 1697 Brentwood** Service Officer. He informed me that GEHA also had an incentive plan. Thanks again Jeff. It is wonderful when we can share and learn from others.

As of the end of September we had 24 chapter Service Officers. **Chapter 111 Roanoke Valley** longtime Service Officer **Sam Stevens** retired from that position after 13 years of service. It did not take the chapter long to fill that vacancy. While some chapters have no Service Officer, Roanoke Valley now has two. Congratulations to **Mark Fisher** and **Delwyn (Del) Dyer** for stepping up to fill that short void. They will serve as Co-Service Officers. Welcome aboard.

One of the many things that I love about being the Federation's Service Officer is my chapter visits. I haven't been out much over the last, almost, two years. I received an invitation early in the year to be guest speaker for **Chapter 685 Williamsburg** in September. And as the months ticked by, we were still wondering if we would have to have a virtual meeting. That changed in September when I was able to

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attend in-person. Thank you **President Braxton**, Program Chair **Ginny Taylor**, and Service Officer **Frances Mcelroy** for the invitation. And a special thank you to the entire chapter for your hospitality.

I am hoping that as we go forward, we will have many more opportunities to meet, fellowship and enjoy learning more about the many benefits afforded the federal workforce – active and retired. Stay healthy everybody.

**Arlene Arthur, VFN Service Officer**

### NEWS FROM AREA VICE PRESIDENTS

#### **Jeanne Garrison** **Area I**

As the Covid crisis has slowly improved so too the activities in Area I are slowly resuming. Many folks are still reluctant to be in group or public venues. As an older group many are also opposed to trying to use computer technology. This is probably due to lack of knowledge and experience and reluctance to learn something that might seem difficult.

Chapters 685, Williamsburg and 1823, Northern Neck tried some Zoom meetings in the spring and Chapter 1757, Middle Peninsula continued to have Zoom meetings of the chapter officers. Due to closure of the regular meeting location Chapter 682, Peninsula suspended regular meetings. They were not able to get anyone to participate in electronic meetings.

In July Peninsula chapter 682 held the first regular in person meeting since the Covid restrictions. They were able to get Congressman Bobbie Scott to attend and give an update on Congressional actions and answer questions. They have since been able to have regular meetings with guest speakers.

Chapter 685 resumed regular luncheon meetings in August. Second District Congressman Elaine Luria was the speaker. She was able to present information on what she is doing in Washington and answer questions from the group. The chapter is continuing to meet presenting various programs including an Open season health presentation from Juan Valdez, GEHA insurance representative.

Members of Chapter 1757 were also able to try a luncheon meeting. However, with the renewed Covid concerns they are delaying the start of regular luncheon meetings. They are using the online Zoom in the meantime.



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Chapter 1823 does not have a regular meeting place, but it is holding regular meetings and activities as they find venues. There was a September picnic in Belle Isle State Park with Congressman Rob Wittman as guest. They have also had a wine tasting and some members got together for a fishing trip.

A few members were able to attend the recent VFN meeting /conference. Despite the unusual times all chapters have managed to continue to support Alzheimer's research, some members even participating in their local "walks". Everyone is looking forward to seeing things return to normal.

### *Julia Hobbs*

#### *Area II*

All chapters are now in the process of starting the groundwork for the election of Officers that is due to be completed in the November time frame.

During the summer one chapter held an Ice Cream luncheon at an actual Farm dairy store where they have a small deli for sandwiches or Ice Cream; picnic tables to eat on; and petting Zoo for anyone who wanted to bring along grandchildren. It was well attended; everyone enjoyed it and remarked what a good idea it was. I attended as a guest and did some light discussions about current NARFE issues.

One Chapter held a light luncheon at a local Golf course Club. Everyone enjoyed the beautiful setting out in the country. The agenda included a 50/50 drawing from funds donated: half of which to Alzheimer's donation. Also, we had a very informative talk by two Blue Cross Representatives about Covid coverage, wellness cards and questions of interest by the attendees. In addition, there were some very nice handouts for all the attendees. I attended and spoke to the members and their guests about NARFE and presented everyone a colorful fact sheet about NARFE's 100<sup>th</sup> year Birthday.

The other two Chapters are continuing to send out Monthly newsletters to stay in touch with all the members who do not care to attend live meetings and do not understand Zoom.

### *Raymond Orland*

#### *Area IV*

No chapters in Area 1V have had any face to face meetings during this time frame. I have continued to maintain contact with both the Churchland and Brentwood chapters via e-mail. The virus has had a big impact on recruiting in Area 1V.

The Suffolk chapter had an electronic meeting hosted by Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BC/BS). This meeting had members from all the chapters in Area 1V participating. There minor problems but, overall things worked out very good.

I have and will continue to encourage my chapters to invite all members in Area 1V to participate in any electronic meetings they might have during this unusual time.

### ***Luther Santiful*** ***Area VII***

All Area VII chapters, Roanoke Valley – 111, Charlottesville-Albemarle – 135, Harrisonburg -164, Winchester – 180, Page Valley-Luray - 1793 and Shenandoah County – 2358, are viable, and are not at risk of closure. Chapters 111, 135, 180, and 2358 are meeting again in person and doing business as usual. Chapter 164 has opted to wait until the beginning of next year to hold member meeting; however, the executive board members are meeting in person to continue the chapter's business. Chapter 1793 is communicating by email and telephones until their meeting place reopens. Unfortunately, we lost the Chapter 164 President, William Wilkins, to the effects of COVID-19 in September. Our best to his family as they work through this devastating loss. Each Area VII chapter sent attendees to the 2021 Annual Conference or supported the conference in some way. We are all looking forward to the next year which may hold a lot of promise for a more normal organizational environment.

### ***Leslie Ravenell*** ***Area VIII***

In April 2021 Mary Heck stepped down as Area VIII Vice President. In the meantime, until a new Area VP could be elected in October 2021, Immediate Past VFN President Leslie Ravenell agreed to temporarily fill in. At the 66<sup>th</sup> VFN Annual Conference held in October in Richmond a caucus meeting for Area VIII was held with the purpose of electing a new Area Vice President. Only two of the five chapters were present, so it was not possible to conduct an election. Leslie Ravenell has agreed to temporarily perform the duties of Area III VP until an Area meeting is conducted to elect a new Area VP.

**Fredericksburg Chapter 90:** Chapter President Moe Nolet is still on her journey of recovery from a life-threatening illness, but she is making progress every day. In the meantime, Vice President Dennis Cole, has stepped up to conduct the meetings whenever it is needed. An in person executive board meeting was held in August and an in-person chapter meeting was held in September. The meeting place for Chapter 90 is the Salem Church Library. At the annual VFN Conference in Richmond, two members of Chapter 90 were elected to serve on the VFN Board: VFN President: Bob Martin and VFN Secretary: Esther Nash. Congratulations!!

**Colonial Beach Chapter 595** continues to meet in person. They haven't skipped a beat since September 2020. The chapter has been meeting in the same Chinese restaurant since 2003. The restaurant does not have in person dining but allows the chapter to use the meeting room once a month and they are the only ones using the facility. All CDC protocols are observed. In October the chapter president attended a political event for the Democratic candidate for the 99<sup>th</sup> District and she gave him our NARFE

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State Legislative Plan. A few days later the candidate attended the monthly chapter meeting, and he discussed his support of our issues. State Legislative Chair, Debbie Fisk was in attendance. The annual Harvest Supper to support Alzheimer's is scheduled for November 6, 2021.

**Fauquier Chapter 1549:** In June the chapter had an impromptu lunch meeting with ten members present. Recently they had an in person executive board meeting with 10 in attendance. They made plans for in person meetings through June. This chapter meets every other month. In the past they met at the former Officers Club at Vint Hill. This is no longer possible due to the meeting attendance so the chapter will now meet at Northside 29 restaurant.

**Caroline Chapter 2112** will meet in person for the first time since the pandemic on November 4, 2021. They have decided to return to their former meeting place, the Timbers in Ladysmith.

**Falls Run Chapter 2343:** In June ten members came out to an in-person meeting but no one stepped up to be an officer. In July the chapter president and membership chair participated in a ZOOM meeting with several members of the VFN Board to brainstorm ideas for re-vitalizing the chapter. A luncheon meeting was tentatively planned. In September the positivity rate went up in the Falls Run Community and the luncheon was postponed. However, in the meantime, the executive board has indicated that closure of the chapter is the next step because they have no one who is willing to step up to a leadership position. A luncheon meeting is now in the works for December and a final decision will be made. In October the chapter conducted its very successful program "Lights on for Alzheimer's" and raised \$2,600.

### **JIM LITTLE**

#### **Area IX**

Area IX continues to thrive in Northern Virginia with 2,596 members – 48 percent Chapter members and 52 percent National members – representing about 23 percent of the Virginia Federation of NARFE's current membership. We are proud of Springfield Chapter 893, which is the largest chapter in the state of Virginia, along with Manassas Chapter 356, Annandale Chapter 1159, and Woodbridge Chapter 1270. During the pandemic all chapters continued meeting with Zoom, including speakers when available, and Woodbridge Chapter began meeting in-person in June. In-person meetings will begin with all chapters in the next two months, and Holiday celebrations are already being planned. Food Donations for local charities will be a key part of each Holiday Party. Of significant note, Annandale Chapter continued their Adopt-a-Road Project throughout the pandemic; the chapter also sponsored a food donation project, teaming up with the Fairfax County Police Department, generating both food, non-perishables, and cash for the needy.

Also, all chapters continued their Alzheimer's fundraising activities, and at the 2021 Annual Meeting, Annandale Chapter was recognized as the VFN's Second Place fundraising chapter, with Woodbridge and Springfield following as Third and Fourth Place, helping place the VFN as NARFE's Number One Federation in fundraising for Alzheimer's Research! A big thank you also goes to Woodbridge Chapter

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members for their silent auction basket for the VFN Conference Alzheimer's Silent Auction, raising \$100 for Alzheimer's Research, and to the Manassas and Woodbridge Chapters for their participation in the Manassas Walk to End Alzheimer's held on October 16.

Shown in the picture are Woodbridge members Doris McAdams, Bonnie Little, and Jim Little, and Manassas members Tom Storm and Marilyn Markham.

Many thanks go to Pat Jack who took the lead as Area IX Vice President in 2019 until her retirement in June 2021, as well as to Manassas Chapter President Joseph Powell, Springfield Chapter President Michael Moore, Annandale President Doug Jones, and Woodbridge Chapter President Doris McAdams, and all their dedicated board and chapter members for their steadfast support during these very challenging times!



### **Ted Pasek** **Area X**

Summary: Two of the five chapters, Fairfax, and Vienna-Oakton, have been active with in-person meetings. One chapter, Arlington, has some core members who are attempting to keep members organized with a newsletter, interest survey and holiday get-together meeting. The two other chapters, McLean-Great Falls and Metro Northern Virginia have not met and are looking to resume in-person meetings.

**Chapter 7 Arlington** – The Executive Board met in June to discuss the status of the chapter and our next steps. Over the summer, we conducted a survey of chapter members to help determine future directions of our chapter, including meetings, programs, member participation etc. The chapter sent an electronic survey using Survey Monkey to all our members with an email address and sent a hard-copy survey via First Class mail to those without an email address. They produced a newsletter in September announcing that our first in-person meeting since March 2020 would be a luncheon on December 9, 2021, at the Italian Café where they will discuss the survey results.

**Chapter 489 McLean-Great Falls** - The Chapter has not been active since before Covid restrictions. They have yet to resume in-person meetings.

**Chapter 737 Fairfax** – The Chapter has resumed in-person meetings after an in-person picnic in June. Fairfax also changed its meeting schedule to the first Tuesday, rather than the second Tuesday of the month. Both September and October meetings were in-person although the member count was about half the usual numbers. Retired Ambassador George Ward discussed today's Myths and Facts existing in Africa. In October Daniel Cohen from the Alzheimer's Association gave an interesting presentation on Alzheimer's, Dementia and Alzheimer's Research. Other meetings were held with Zoom.

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They collected food in October to donate to Afghanistan Refugees, collected at the 29 Diner in Fairfax, VA. The Chapter continues donating food to "Food for Others" in Fairfax for the less fortunate in Fairfax County.

Approximately ten Chapter members attended the Virginia Federation of NARFE (VFN) at the Conference in Midlothian/Richmond in October. Two Chapter members are Congressional District Liaisons (CDLs) for Districts 8 and 10.

**Chapter 1116 (Vienna-Oakton)** - The Chapter has continued to meet each month at the Vienna Community Center.

In September, Chapter 1116 (Vienna-Oakton) met with guest speaker and chapter member, William (Bill) Inch, who retired in 2020 from the position of Deputy Director, Customs and Border Protection, Cargo Systems Program Directorate, Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Three members of the chapter attended the VFN Conference in Richmond in October. Mark Arpa was one of the photographers. Kathy Arpa gave officer training. Mary Margaret McGowan attended the Service Officer Committee Meeting.

The October meeting featured Ms. Terri Robinson (pictured here) --a real estate agent for over 20 years for RE/MAX, who had previously provided a talk entitled "The Art of downsizing" at the recent VFN Conference. She agreed to provide a similar talk at the meeting, albeit without her PowerPoint presentation, when the originally scheduled speaker had to cancel. Local NARFE chapter members were invited to the meeting and members from Annandale, Arlington and Fairfax attended the meeting, along with other local guests.



Officers will be elected at the November meeting with installation of officers in December by Area X Vice President, Ted Pasek.

Chapter members attended the Northern Virginia Caucus Meeting on October 29 at the American Legion Post in Fairfax. New VFN President Robert (Bob) Martin (pictured here) was the guest speaker.

**Chapter 1665 Metro Northern Virginia** - The Chapter has not been meeting since prior to the pandemic and are still waiting for the meeting restaurant location to re-open.

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## ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE (ECC)

The last six-months has been a flurry of activity for our ECC Team. Our goal of providing our membership with electronic communication methods essential for recruitment, retention, and Legislative advocacy moved forward considerably.

The ECC approach to effect changes is two-fold:

- Explore available social media venues which will bring the Virginia Federation's use of electronic communications and social media into the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- Explore and identify the most cost-effective means to do so

What may have been a two-year challenge, we were able to accomplish in a much shorter time period. Our team feels like we have new or refreshed platforms developed and now we must communicate to our membership, our Chapter Officers and Area Vice Presidents in particular, how to advertise and use them.

Our Public Relations Chair, Doris McAdams, developed a Facebook page (Virginia Federation of NARFE) and continues to post frequently to keep the page fresh and up to date. We ask that you talk about our page, share it with your members and help us develop a community of users large enough that it is significant and worthy of attracting like-minded civil servants.

I hope you enjoy the publications that Kathy Arpa, our Newsletter Editor, created. She continues to create our Spring and Fall Newsletters as well as the Annual Report. I hope you routinely get copies of these documents; however, they are also posted on our website. The Annual Report gives a significant snapshot of all the work being done behind the scenes during our year. If you have missed any of these, look them up on the website, pour a cup of 'joe,' sit back, and catch up.

Did you know that we have updated our website? We hope you will visit it regularly and find it to be a great resource for "everything VFN." It is a WordPress site, and we hope it is organized so that it becomes a valuable resource. As you know, a website is a work in progress. We anticipate and appreciate your comments and suggestions. Behind the scenes we have two sites. One is our main site with most of the information we want to discriminate is under the check with Debbie URL [www.vanarfe.org](http://www.vanarfe.org).

The most exciting news is that we also developed a second useful site, but we will be using it as a training tool as well. The URL [www.vanarfe.com](http://www.vanarfe.com) is the home for Area and Chapter pages. All the page's link to the main site; however, it was structured so we can train interested members in how to use the site. If you have interest in learning more about this training opportunity, please let me know. If you are not familiar with WordPress, it is wysiwyg (what you see is what you get); no html is involved. Looking for creative folks who want to learn more or you already know about WordPress and would like to





# HAPPY HOLIDAYS

from the Virginia Federation of NARFE!

Still Celebrating

