



Midlothian Chapter 2265 NEWSLETTER

Serving Current and Retired Federal Employees Since 1921

Chapter e-mail: narfe2265df@gmail.com

July – September 2022

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Debbie Fisk

Summer 2022 is clearly upon us. Some beach somewhere, a big umbrella casting shade over an empty chair. Palm trees are growing, and warm breezes are blowing. I picture myself there, on some beach somewhere. Doesn't that sound appealing?

But the reality, we are presented with quite a few decisions to make in the near future; not only who will lead our country, but who will lead our association.

Let us not forget that we are members of NARFE, and that the mission of our organization is to preserve and to protect the earned benefits of our fellow federal employees, retirees, and annuitants. Therefore, attention must be paid to the campaign rhetoric and "promises" made by the numerous candidates for the offices of leadership, both nationally and locally. An effort must be made to sift through the sometimes very foggy and unclear statements regarding our taxes, social security, and health care.

We should try to decide how we, as individual federal employees, retirees, and annuitants, will be affected by any one of the proposed changes which have been presented. Those of you who are "tuned in" to the NARFE website, can click on the Legislative Action Center (<https://www.narfe.org/advocacy/>) to take advantage of the ease of sending a letter to your representative and/or senator regarding a particular piece of pending legislation. You can edit the letter to state how that legislation will affect you personally. It is an important part of being a NARFE member. It's easy to do, doesn't cost anything, and your message goes directly to the office you intend without going through any screening process.

I hope everyone is preparing to vote:

November 2022 for our U.S. Representative

U.S. District 1:

Rob Wittman (R)

Herb Jones (D)

Austin Nichols (I)

U.S. District 4:

Donald McEachin (D)

Leon Benjamin (R)

U.S. District 5:

Bob Good (R)

Joshua Throneburg (D)

August 2022 for our NARFE President, Secretary/Treasurer, and Region X Vice President

For more information on the candidates: <https://www.narfe.org>. At this link look in the top right-hand corner, in gray letters, click on "Member Quick Links" (you will have to login to the member portal).

NARFE Region X Vice President – Robert Allen & Charles Talley - <https://www.narfe.org/2022-narfe-election-candidates-amendment-proposals/statements-of-candidates-for-regional-vice-president/>

NARFE National President – Bill R. Austin, Jon William Dowie, Gary Roundtree, Sr., William "Bill" Shackelford - <https://www.narfe.org/2022-narfe-election-candidates-amendment-proposals/statements-of-candidates-for-national-office/>

"Politics" are not a favorite topic of everyone, but just sitting idle and "letting somebody else do it" is not the best way to solve a problem, whether it be national or local.

I wish everyone a wonderful summer and we will continue to face challenges and opportunities together.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

Debbie Fisk

The week of June 17, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) released its fiscal year 2023 (FY23) appropriations bill. This bill historically has been the vehicle for Congress to assert itself into the decision regarding federal pay rates for the coinciding calendar year. But if Congress remains silent, as the House has done with its FY23 version of the FSGG appropriations bill, the decision is left to the president, who proposed a 4.6% average pay increase in his FY23 budget.

While the FSGG bill did not specify a pay raise, other House members are pushing for a larger 5.1% pay raise for a standalone bill, H.R. 6398, the Federal Adjustment of Income Rates (FAIR) Act, which was introduced by Rep. Gerald Connolly, D-VA. You can write to your members of Congress to support the bill at the NARFE Legislative Action Team Center. (<https://www.narfe.org/advocacy/legislative-action-center/>)

The Senate, on June 23, passed a bipartisan bill to address gun violence that amounts to the first major federal gun safety legislation in decades. The vote was 65 to 33 with 15 Republicans joining Democrats in support of the measure. The bill now goes to the House for a vote before it can be sent to President Biden. It is anticipated that the House will quickly pass the bill, the most sweeping gun legislation in decades. It is important to remember that it is not what the bill does not have in it, but to celebrate what it does have in it. This is a beginning, and to all who suffer, lives lost and those left behind; we believe this legislation will begin to heal our Country.

And for everyone who is affected by WEP/GPO. There is more activity for repeal of these than we have ever seen before. HR 82 and HR 5723 both have almost enough co-sponsors to bring the legislation to the floor for a vote. Both call for repeal, HR 82 would be permanent, and HR 5723 has a 5-year "sunset" clause. Either one would be acceptable since less than 2 million are affected by these and financially it affects

less than 1.5% of the Social Security Budget. It is hopeful that they don't wait until we are all gone before Congress does the right thing.

There are two reform bills out there HR 2337 and HR 5834. We are in support for any relief, but it is safe to say that our preference would be to eliminate WEP/GPO. To all who believe that it was unrealistic for us to believe we would retire and be able to collect our "earned benefits;" we must say to them that we will continue to fight until our rights are restored.

We are planning our August 10th Chapter meeting around a conversation about WEP/GPO. We intend to invite Senator Kaine or a staff member to the meeting. If the House is able to get a vote on the floor before the August recess, it will be up to the Senate to finish the job. We will reach out to Senator Warner also, but at this time we have not made contact. SAVE the DATE for August 10 if you would like to be heard.

CONGRESSIONAL UPDATES

Bob Zombron

CDL VA 7th Congressional District

The 7th Congressional District

As per the next election date, Tuesday November 8, 2022, Abigail Spanberger will no longer be a candidate for congress in the Midlothian and metro Richmond area. The 7th District has moved northward - towards Northern Virginia, due to congressional district realignment, required as a result of the 2020 census. Representative Spanberger will continue to represent us until January 1, 2023, when the new congress takes over. She has sponsored many bills relevant to federal employees and retirees; if she wins election in the relocated 7th District, we will expect her further support to sponsoring bills in favor of federal workers and retirees.

Representative Spanberger, thank you and good luck on whatever your future holds.

New Districts and Candidates

Our NARFE Chapter will generally be represented by the First Congressional District - now represented by Rob Wittman; the Fourth District now represented by

Donald McEachin and possibly the Third, now represented by Bobby Scott.

It appears that Herb Jones will challenge incumbent Rob Wittman in the First District; Terry Namkung will challenge incumbent Bobby Scott in the Third and Leon Benjamin will challenge incumbent Donald McEachin in the Fourth District.

Please check with your local county election office to verify which primary winners and incumbents will actually participate in the fall election.

Meanwhile, keep posted on the voting records - of the incumbent candidates - of the three congressional districts that serve members in the Midlothian Chapter of NARFE. The new challengers will have to keep us posted of their intentions in regard to supporting NARFE and all federal employees and retirees. Their pledged support will be well appreciated.

National Legislation

Senate Introduces Equal COLA Act

S. 4221 – on May 16, with NARFE’s support the Equal COLA Act was introduced by Sen Alex Padilla, D-CA. This is the companion bill to H.R. 304 – the House version. The bill would ensure that the cost-of-living adjustments to Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) match the change in consumer prices.

House Panel Approves New Federal Telework Bill

HR 7951 - On June 15 the House Committee on Oversight and Reform advanced this bill which could give the government the tools to compete with the private sector. Expanding telework is one of its goals.

House FY23 Appropriations Bill Paves the for 4.6 Percent Pay Raise

In mid-June a House Appropriations subcommittee released its FY 23 appropriations bill. In this action if the House remains silent on the actual raise amount, the President’s proposed increase of 4.6 percent may take effect. This would be the largest pay increase since 2002. The President’s alternative plan is due in late August.

Support the Fair COLA for Seniors Act of 2021 (H.R. 4315)

Tell congress it’s time to switch to the CPI-E. CPI-W no longer is enough to fill the food basket, rising health and life insurance and goods and services specifically for the needs of seniors. This change would affect all on Social Security and CSRS primarily.

NARFE President Urges House Holdouts to Support Repeal of WEP and GPO

On June 7, NARFE President Ken Thomas sent letters urging targeted lawmakers to cosponsor a bill to repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO). Specifically, H.R.82 - the Social Security Fairness Act co-sponsorship is requested from the lawmakers. Currently H.R. 82 has 277 bipartisan sponsors, 13 shy of the 290 needed to force a House vote.

Reps. Spanberger, Wittman, McEachin and Scott are co-sponsors of this bill.

Remarks

To get a more in-depth analysis of the above actions check with NARFE’s – Advocacy section of the NARFE website, NARFE.org.

NARFE-PAC

Consider a donation to NARFE-PAC to provide funds to help support the members of the House and Senate who support us.

STATE LEGISLATION

Paul Goldman lost his lawsuit that attempted to force new elections in the House of Delegates for November 2022. A panel of judges released an opinion and Attorney Jason Miyares claimed victory in the case that he took over from his predecessor. Consequently, the next Virginia election will take place for the House and the Senate in November 2023.

On Friday, June 17 the Virginia Legislators returned to the Capitol to take votes on the bills in conference that were connected to the budget’s passing and to also vote on the Governor’s Amendments to the Budget Conference Report that had passed on bipartisan votes from both Chambers a few weeks ago.

The Governor did not veto anything in the budgets, but he did propose 35 amendments, seeking changes to the

spending plans to suspend the state gas tax for three months, loosen the rules for eligibility and funding of lab schools outside of local K-12 systems, and amend sentencing credits for prison inmates to prevent the release of more than 500 inmates this summer.

Governor Youngkin announced completion of the budget last week, ending a sometimes-combative six-month showdown with the General Assembly over taxes and spending priorities. The Governor does not yet have the actual budget bills to sign into law, as the end of the current fiscal year approaches and the next two-year spending cycle begins on July 1. The assembly must first finish enrolling the bills in final form for the governor's signature.

Despite setbacks at the hands of the assembly, we celebrate a bundle of budget victories with a divided legislature. The assembly adopted more than two-thirds of the 38 amendments he proposed to the revised budget for the current year and the \$165 billion two-year spending plan.

Our Virginia 2022 Legislative plan was not as successful as we had hoped. However, we have already begun our plan for 2023 with a renewed energy and emphasis on like-minded legislators who we hope to collaborate with. State income tax relief and nursing home requirements are on the top of our list.

Soon you will receive the 2023 State Legislative Plan. Please share it with friends, neighbors and most importantly, your legislators.

Our Current Representatives

VA Congressional District 7

Abigail Spanberger – 1239 LHOB, Washington DC

>DC Office: 202-225-2815

VA Congressional District 4

Donald McEachin – 314 CHOB, Washington DC

>DC Office: 202-225-6365

VA Congressional District 3

Bobby Scott – 1201 LHOB, Washington DC

>DC Office: 202-225-8354

U.S. Senators

US Senator Mark Warner (D-VA)

>DC Office: 202-224-2023

>Richmond Office: 804-775-2314

US Senator Timothy Kaine (D-VA)

>DC Office: 202-224-4024

>Richmond Office: 804-771-2221

PROGRAMS

Verona McLeod

During this year the Program Committee has tried to put together interesting programs based on the member input during our Chat and Chew meeting. Unfortunately, the participation hasn't been too favorable. We are trying to understand what will encourage participation. We're open to your input and suggestions.

Programs for the balance of the year have been approved by the board and include our Picnic, with entertainment, for the **July 13** meeting at Hopewell UMC. The Chapter will absorb the cost of the boxed lunches. **See the flyer in this newsletter.** **August** is national legislature month and some of the candidates in the upcoming election will be our speaker. In **September**, Gary Powers, a popular historian will be our guest. As usual, Ms. Kathy Bass, FEP **BCBS**, **will be our guest in October. Kathy and her team were our guest in May and provided very useful information on nutrition and led the group in some chair yoga exercises. Kathy has agreed to join with us next year on a recurring basis to offer similar information and low impact exercise/yoga.** **November** is our Alzheimer's Fund Raiser month and in **December** we will have our Christmas luncheon.

We sincerely hope that some of these programs will be of interest to you and encourage your presence and participation.

MEMBERSHIP

Verona McLeod

The chapter membership at the end of May was 202. There are 127 potential chapter members in the area. This number represents members who belong to National but could be Midlothian Chapter Members. Please check your membership to ensure you are where

you want to be. If you decide that you want to be in the Chapter, call any chapter officer who will assist you in being transferred to a chapter instead of National.

The chapter is brainstorming ways to increase our membership and encourage participation. It's critical that we do this to maintain a creditable and viable organization which represents all of us. NARFE is not just for annuitants and retirees. It represents active employees as well. We all are subject to lose our benefits, as we know them today, at any time. So please help us in our recruitment efforts and remember that NARFE lobbies for us. We need your help to maintain and increase membership and participation.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

JULY

2 John Hewlett, Jr.; **6** Patricia Lane; **9** Helen Willis; **17** Nancy Price; **19** Shirley Alexander, Louis Ciavarelli; **22** John Donahue; **23** Robert Warren

AUGUST

7 Shirley Wilson; **9** Carol Lipinski; **10** Sarah Boettger; **16** Russell Melroy; **18** Mary Nissen; **19** Carolyn Hardman; **21** Pat Sowers; **22** Ann Simpkins; **24** Lois Thomas; **29** Tony Michalek, Joanne Montague; **30** Joseph Rein

SEPTEMBER

3 Thang Pham; **7** Carolyn Matthews; **15** John Gamble; **22** Roy McLeod; **27** Sylvia Coleman; **29** Judy Archer

SERVICE OFFICER

Virginia Bozarth

If you or anyone you may know has a need for help with federal benefits or the death of a loved one, please reach out and I will try to help. I may not know the answer to the question, but I can get in touch with those who do and find an answer for you or connect you to someone who can help.

What exactly does a Service Officer do?

- Becomes the face and voice of NARFE – helps members apply for benefits, life insurance, etc.

- Relays information as needed on Medicare and Medicaid, Social Security, and retirement benefits.
- Writes notes to families of those who have passed to offer information and support.
- Offers the “Be Prepared for Life’s Events” to NARFE members

ALZHEIMER’S

Faye Mckay

In the June 15, Alzheimer’s & Dementia e-newsletter, there is an article entitled "Fight the Darkness of Alzheimer's on The Longest Day." On June 21, The Longest Day, thousands of people from all over the world will be participating in fundraising activities to raise awareness for the care, support and research efforts of the Alzheimer's Association. One team is also paddling for the cause on this day in the Purple Canoe. You can read about it on their blog.

There are also ALZ talks in a monthly online series featuring conversations with those affected by Alzheimer's or another dementia. The June 23 talk will feature a mother-daughter caregiving team sharing their perspective and how they support each other.

In this newsletter you can also read about “OnStar” and how it continues to support the Alzheimer's Association. It works to help more than 11 million Alzheimer's and other dementia caregivers to keep an eye on the ones they care for while supporting the work of the Alzheimer's Association.

Let us continue to stay informed about the work and research being done to fight this disease and do all we can to support the Alzheimer's Association.

ALZHEIMER’S UPDATE

Ed Heflin & Debbie Fisk

According to the Alzheimer’s Association 2014 Alzheimer’s Disease Facts and Figures, someone in America develops Alzheimer’s disease every 67 seconds, and by mid-century that number will soar to every 33 seconds.

The burden Alzheimer's and dementia places on individuals, caregivers, government, and our nation's health care system continues to grow. There is data in every state that confirms that it is the most expensive disease in the nation, costing the United States \$214 billion annually. Nearly one in every five dollars spent on Medicare is on someone with Alzheimer's or another dementia.

There is also a disproportionate burden of Alzheimer's disease on women. Women are 2.5 times more likely than men to provide intensive "on-duty" care 24-hours a day for a person living with Alzheimer's.

A new study suggests that the insecticide DDT may be linked with Alzheimer's disease. Researchers found evidence of DDT exposure in 80 percent of study participants with Alzheimer's, as well as 70 percent of the study participants who are not diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. It is important to note that these preliminary results do not indicate that exposure to DDT, which was banned in the United States in 1972 but is still used in other countries, causes Alzheimer's.

There is a new booklet "I have Alzheimer's Disease" which you can find at alz.org offering information and tools to help those living in the early stages of Alzheimer's or other dementia live their best lives for as long as possible. There are insights from people with Alzheimer's and offers resources to help plan and prepare and receive support.

Our Chapter offers a 50/50 raffle at each Chapter Meeting with proceeds divided between the person whose name was drawn and our ongoing Alzheimer's Research Fund. If you are not able to come to our in-person meetings, the treasurer is always happy to accept your donation.

ROAD SCHOLAR: Senior Solo Travel Sees a Boost in 2021

Cindy Graunke

When COVID-19 vaccines became available in early 2021, older adults over 50 wasted no time getting vaccinated and back on the road again to travel and experience the world after isolating for months in quarantine. First among that group of older adult

travelers were single women – those intrepid solo travelers who yearned to be back out in the world enjoying life.

Road Scholar — the not-for-profit leader in educational travel for "baby boomers and beyond" — typically sees about a quarter of its participants traveling independently, but so far for 2021, the percentage of solo travelers is up to almost 30%. "Road Scholar participants love the adventure of learning about and discovering the people and cultures of this great wide world," said Road Scholar President James Moses. "So, for our community, being isolated at home during quarantine was frustrating and difficult. But none were more affected than those who live alone." A study published by The Gerontological Society of America showed older adults who live alone were less likely to see others in person early in the pandemic. Sixty-eight-year-old teacher Paula Wooters from Rochester, N.Y. lives alone and was isolated from her family during the lockdown. "My son and sisters each live over a thousand miles away in states that had a high number of Covid cases," said Paula, "so visiting them was problematic." After a year of distance teaching, Wooters journeyed to Paris with Road Scholar as a solo traveler in September 2021. "I decided that if I waited for someone I knew to travel with, I would miss out on exciting opportunities," she said. "I chose to travel with Road Scholar because, not only does Road Scholar take care of all the details of the trip, but the journey is also an educational experience."

Though 67-year-old solo traveler Catharine Fowle was living with family during the shutdown, she, too, felt disconnected with the world. "During the pandemic, I felt that I had lost a year because we weren't able to go out and have any new experiences," said Fowle, who traveled to Costa Rica in August of 2021.

"Although the percentage of solo Road Scholars has been trending up over the past ten years, the organization has seen an increase in the percentage of solo travelers in 2021. Traveling Solo was a bit of anxiety about going abroad, I found that going on this trip was liberating. After seeing the care that Road

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**NARFE
Midlothian Chapter 2265
Meeting**

**Wednesday, July 13, 2022
10 am – 12 noon**

**Inside Picnic Meeting
Boxed Lunches
With Games and Entertainment**



**Hopewell UMC
6200 Courthouse Road
North Chesterfield, VA**

FREE



**Chapter 2265
Committees**

Alzheimer's:
Faye McKay
804-378-0826

Audit:
Brenda Cordle: 804-744-2969
Ann Simpkins: 804-379-3631

Chaplain:
In memory of
Charlie Wilson

Greeter:
Ann Simpkins
804-379-3631

Hospitality:
Cathy Dorsett: 804-674-4039
Ann Simpkins: 804-379-3631

Membership:
Verona McLeod
804-744-4589

National Legislation:
Don Utton
804-896-1804

Net Coordinator:
Deborah Fisk
804-748-8722

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Service Officer:
Virginia Bozarth
804-275-0820

Special Activities:
Lynn Osborne
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State Legislation:
Steve Stastny
804-271-8690

Sunshine:
Vacant

Telephone Tree:
Vacant



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Scholar took to keep us safe, I thoroughly enjoyed the trip without any worries.” Road Scholar caters to solo travelers with a selection of programs with no single supplement and a unique roommate matching option for those who want to share a room. But perhaps the greatest benefits of traveling with a Road Scholar rather than independently is the sense of security that comes with it, especially during a pandemic. “Road Scholar helped me feel confident as a solo traveler,” said Wooters. “They let us know in advance what we would need for traveling overseas and arranged for the required COVID testing for re-entry into the United States. I felt safe and well cared for, and it was easy to make new friends.” President Moses said that Road Scholar’s focus on educational travel attracts adults who all have one thing in common: a love of learning. “This shared passion creates a sense of camaraderie among all of our participants, whether couples, solo

travelers or friends traveling together,” said Moses. Solo traveler Peggy Tardy, 72, from Merritt Island, Fla. hiked Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, and Zion National Parks with Road Scholar in September 2021. She said she felt very welcome by her fellow participants and was enriched by her interactions with other lifelong learners. “I not only learned from our Group Leaders, but I gained a wealth of information from my fellow travelers by listening to their experiences,” she said. “I would encourage anyone with any doubts about traveling solo: you are always one of the groups.” Tardy enjoyed her program so much that she has already enrolled in two more Road Scholar programs to Mount Rushmore and Paris in 2022.

Learn more about solo travel with Road Scholar at ww.roadscholar.org/solo. About Road Scholar, Road Scholar is the nation’s largest not-for-profit educational travel organization for adults – a true university.