



# NARFE Chapter 1116 Newsletter

Vienna-Oakton Chapter 1116  
1708 Palm Springs Drive  
Vienna, VA 22182-2330



**OCTOBER 2022**

**Next Chapter Meeting**  
**Tuesday, October 11, 2022**  
**1 PM**  
**Vienna Community Center**  
**Vienna, VA 22180**

**Next Board Meeting**  
**Thursday, October 27, 2022**  
**1 PM**  
**Vienna Community Center**

**2022 Board**  
**Chapter Officers**

**President**  
Kathy Arpa 703-205-9041  
mkarpa@hotmail.com

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President & Programs**  
Ralph Dantine 703-938-9757

**2nd Vice President & Membership**  
Jayne Seidman 703-938-2274

**Secretary**  
Chris Gieseler 703-849-0008

**Treasurer**  
David Graf 703-938-2962

**Board Members**  
**Alzheimer's and Photographer**  
Mark Arpa 703-205-9041

**Hostess Jayne Seidman**  
703-938-2274

**National Legislation**  
Daad Pierce 571-274-9334

**State Legislation Chris**  
Gieseler 703-849-0008

**Newsletter Team**  
Kathy Arpa, Chris Gieseler,  
Dave Graf, Mary Margaret  
McGowan

**Public Relations**  
Pec Chan 703-930-3596

**Service Officer**  
Mary Margaret McGowan  
703-281-5123

**Sunshine**  
Harriet Epstein 703-560-4137

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – KATHY ARPA**

It is frightening to still see the impacts of Hurricane Ian on Florida and the East Coast. They serve as a good reminder that during storms and emergencies, we need access to information on the latest threats in our area, and guidance on what actions to take. Our next meeting on October 11 at 1 PM will feature Courtney Arroyo, Community Engagement Manager, Department of Emergency Management and Security, Fairfax County Department of Family Services. Courtney will share essential information about how to prepare for a natural emergency in our area. The slate of officers for Chapter 1116 will be announced at our October 11<sup>th</sup> meeting and we will elect our officers at our November 8<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Fall is here and we are back in action with our NARFE meetings. We had a good crowd at our September 13<sup>th</sup> meeting with Debbie Fisk, VFN's State Legislation Chair, as our guest speaker. Members from three local chapters joined us. See report on page 3. Also, see valuable information in our National and State Legislation reports on pages 5 and 6.

Plans are being made for our annual Holiday Party in December. Look for the details in the November newsletter.

*Kathy*

## **MEMBERSHIP REPORT – JAYNE SEIDMAN**

We currently have 178 chapter members with 147 National Members in our area, for a total of 325 NARFE members in our area. Help us grow our chapter by recruiting active and retired federal employees to join NARFE! Recruiters will receive \$10 for each new member who joins by December 31 and will be entered in prize drawings for each new member they have recruited. Share your NARFE Magazines with prospective members. Hand one to your local mail carrier and ask your carrier to share it with his or her co-workers. Give a gift membership to a family member or friend who is getting ready to retire. Be sure to put your member number on the membership application in the NARFE Magazine. It is usually above your name on the mailing label of your Magazine.

## COMING UP



**October 11** – Chapter Meeting – 1:00 PM – Vienna Community Center – Guest speaker will be Courtney Arroyo, (pictured here), Community Engagement Manager, Department of Emergency Management and Security, Fairfax County Department of Family Services – Courtney will share very timely information about how to prepare for a natural emergency in our area.

**October 21** - NOVA Caucus Meeting, 11:30 AM --American Legion in Fairfax - Guest speaker – Bill Shackelford, NARFE President-elect – Lunch \$15. RSVP required by October 18. See Kathy for details.

**October 23** – Beacon 50+ Expo – Noon to 4 PM – Springfield Town Center - Entry 2 by Maggiano’s – free event.

**November 8** – Chapter Meeting – 1:00 PM – Vienna Community Center – Election of 2023 Officers. Guest speaker will be Michele Nesbitt-Johnson, CareFirst MSA BlueCross BlueShield (BC/BS), Account Manager II FEHBP Account Management/FEP Local Operations. She will cover the 2023 BC/BS plan updates and premiums.

**December 3** FEHB Open Season Workshop sponsored by Congressman Connolly – 10 AM to 2 PM - Fairfax County Government Center

**December 13** – Installation of 2023 Officers and Holiday Party – watch for details

### SUNSHINE REPORT – HARRIET EPSTEIN

We are sending get well wishes to our 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Ralph Dantine, who is having some health issues. If you know of someone who needs a little sunshine, please let me know. You can call me at 703-560-4137.

### TREASURER’S REPORT – DAVID GRAF

Since the September Newsletter, we received \$189.88 for membership dues from National for August. Our only expense was \$100.00 to reimburse Mark Arpa for a portion of his budgeted expenses to attend the FEDcon22 NARFE National Conference in Scottsdale, AZ, which occurred on August 21-23, 2022.

The 50/50 drawing for Alzheimer’s Research raised \$75.00 at the September Membership meeting. A Chapter member also donated \$100.00 to the Alzheimer’s Research Fund. The donations were sent to the VFN Coordinator for the Alzheimer’s Research Fund. The total donations so far this year are \$472.50.

Members who wish to make charitable, tax-deductible donations toward the treatment, prevention and, ultimately, a cure for this disease and enable our Chapter to also get credit should make your check payable to **NARFE-Alzheimer’s Research** and include **Chapter 1116** on the memo line. Send your checks to me at:

David Graf, NARFE Chapter 1116, 1708 Palm Springs Dr, Vienna, VA 22182-2330

### ALZHEIMER’S REPORT – MARK ARPA

ALZHEIMERS NARFE is proud to announce that the NARFE’s Alzheimer’s Fund has achieved its goal of donating \$15 million to Alzheimer’s research. Since 1985, NARFE members have played a significant role in seeking a cure for Alzheimer’s disease. Through its partnership with the Alzheimer’s Association, NARFE supports research into the causes, prevention, detection, and effective treatment of Alzheimer’s and all other dementia. Public education on the need for research – our only tool for conquering the disease – also is an important focus. A generous anonymous donation in September pushed the Fund’s total past \$15 million. As of September 30, \$24,447.00 was contributed to Alzheimer’s Research in Virginia.

## SECRETARY'S REPORT ON SEPTEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup> CHAPTER MEETING – CHRIS GIESELER

The Chapter's Membership Meeting was held September 13, 2022, at the Vienna Community Center. The meeting was called to order at 1:05 PM by President Kathy Arpa, who led us in the Pledge of Allegiance. She acknowledged our guests (pictured below) from other chapters and led us in a moment of silence for the victims and family affected by the terrorist attacks of 2001. On a more positive note, Kathy inquired about birthdays over the summer, and a few folks answered, so we sang "Happy Birthday" for them and for Kathy, whose birthday was the date of meeting (Sept. 13)!

From the introductory portion of the meeting, we moved to the program, a presentation by Ms. Deborah Fisk (Debbie), who is the State Legislative Chair for the Virginia Federation of NARFE (VFN). Our Chapter's State Legislation Chair, Chris Gieseler, introduced our speaker, by noting that Debbie is also President of NARFE Chapter 2266 in Midlothian and the Chair of NARFE's Electronic Communications Committee, as well as a professional photographer and activist for that profession.

Debbie's presentation included an overview of the VFN's efforts to influence legislation that could be introduced in the 2023 Virginia General Assembly. The first step in that process was drafting the "VFN Virginia 2023 State Legislative Plan" which involved working with the State Legislative Team and obtaining the VFN Board's approval. Copies of the brochure were distributed to attendees. Of the five issues on the Plan, Debbie's efforts are going to focus on the first issue, getting a partial exemption from Virginia income tax on pension income for Civil Service Retirement System annuitants. By contrast FERS annuitants whose Social Security benefits are exempt from Virginia income tax. Other issues on the Plan (nursing home standards and a family caregiver tax credit) are subjects of legislation that has been already prefiled with General Assembly or carried over by them to 2023.

Debbie is also advocating for certain federal legislation, specifically, the "WEP/GPO" issue, which is under active consideration by Congress.

Debbie concluded her program by answering some questions from the audience.

The meeting then went to break and was followed by reports by the Treasurer who provided his own report and filled in for Secretary Chris Gieseler regarding the May membership meeting and the June Chapter picnic. Jayne Seidman provided a membership report, and Kathy mentioned NARFE's Fall Membership drive. Chris and National Legislation Chair Daad Pierce provided their respective reports on legislative activity. Mark Arpa reported on Alzheimer's research. Planned and potential programs for future meetings were announced by Ralph Dantine, Program Chair. More information about these programs appears on Page 2 of this newsletter. Kathy also discussed the recent NARFE elections, the FEDHUB communications system that NARFE is rolling out, and the "FEDCon22"

NARFE conference. Upon motion made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 2:45, followed by a slide show by Mark, with commentary by Kathy regarding FEDCon22.

John Bankson, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Chapter 1159 (Annandale); Pat Myers, President, Chapter 7 (Arlington); Ed Weiler, State Legislation Chair, Chapter 7, (Arlington); Mary Ann Munley, State Legislation Chair, Chapter 1159 (Annandale); Debbie Fisk, VFN State Legislation Chair and Chris Gieseler, State Legislation Chair, Chapter 1116 (Vienna-Oakton) at Chapter 1116 Monthly Meeting on September 13.



## **SERVICE OFFICER REPORT – MARY MARGARET MCGOWAN**

The Office of Personnel Management has released the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) premium rate charts for 2023. Federal employees and retirees will see an average increase of 8.7 percent in their share of premiums, prior to accounting for changes in plan enrollment. This is the highest increase since 2011.

Total premiums increased by an average of 7.2 percent for 2023, with the government share increasing by 6.6 percent. The average increase for federal employees and retirees for the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) was 0.21 percent for dental plans. There was a decrease of 0.41 percent for vision plans.

NARFE encourages all members to review their insurance options this Open Season. There may be other plans available that will provide great coverage with a less expensive premium. NARFE is hard at work developing our Open Season resources, including informative [webinars](#), to help you with making your decisions.

The federal benefits Open Season starts Monday, November 14, and runs until Monday, December 12. During this period, federal employees, annuitants, and other eligible individuals can make changes to their FEHB and FEDVIP plans. The FEHB features 271 health plan choices for 2023.

### **EVALUATE YOUR CURRENT FEHB PLAN**

See the article on Page 28 of your October NARFE magazine. It is a good time to review your current plan's coverage and ask yourself if it met your needs and expectations this year. Ask these questions:

- Did I have coverage issues?
- What additional coverage will I need next year (especially if you plan to do international travel)?
- Was I able to get the medications / prescriptions needed?
- Did I have to pay high prescription copayments?
- Were my deductibles, copayments and coinsurance excessive this year?
- Were the labs, doctor's offices, hospitals, and outpatient facilities available in my immediate area and covered by my current FEHB plan?
- Did I have to travel out of my area to see a provider or have procedures performed?
- Was customer service helpful and easily accessible?
- Did I encounter unanticipated expenses that I thought were covered in my current plan?

### **Upcoming Virtual NARFE Webinars**

Understanding Medicare Advantage Options Thursday - October 13 at 2 PM

Which FEHB Plan is for You (Employee Version) – October 25 at 2 PM

Which FEHB Plan is For You (Retiree, no Medicare Part B Version – November 3 at 2 PM

Which Plans Work Best with Medicare Parts A & B – November 17 at 2 PM

Go to [NARFE.org](https://www.narfe.org) to sign up.

### **Message from the Chapter President/Newsletter Editor**

Effective in January 2023, NARFE Chapter 1116 will need a Chapter Newsletter Editor or co-editor. It is my plan to ensure that the November and December issues of our Chapter newsletter are published. Anyone who is interested in accepting the position may discuss with me the details and essential skills needed to fulfill the duties as editor. You can call me at 703-205-9041 or email me at [mkarpa@hotmail.com](mailto:mkarpa@hotmail.com)

## NATIONAL LEGISLATION – DAAD PIERCE

### Legislation:

- On September 20<sup>th</sup>, the House Ways and Means Committee voted by unanimous consent to move the “Social Security Fairness Act” (H.R. 82 regarding WEP and GPO) out of committee without recommendation. On September 21<sup>st</sup>, H.R. 82 was reported to the House and placed on Union Calendar No. 371. This placement does not guarantee the bill will come to the full house. NARFE’s National President Ken Thomas said: “NARFE has pressed for repeal of these onerous penalties for decades. By approving the Social Security Fairness Act, the House Committee on Ways and Means has made more progress on this issue than has ever occurred. That is a real achievement.”
- On September 15<sup>th</sup>, the House voted 225-204 to pass “The Preventing a Patronage System Act” (H.R. 302), which bars future presidents from unilaterally stripping federal workers of their civil service protection. The legislation, introduced by Representative Gerry Connolly (D-VA), would block the White House from creating any new federal job classifications without Congress’ approval. NARFE urged Congress to quickly pass the legislation, with President Ken Thomas writing in a statement, “Lawmakers must uphold the tenet that civil servants are hired and fired based on merit, not political affiliation, a practice that has served our country well since the late 1800s.”
- Senate Democrats, led by Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.), introduced a companion bill in August and applauded the passage of the bill in the House. The lawmakers added that they will be pushing to follow suit in the Senate.
- On September 15<sup>th</sup>, the House of Representatives passed the Whistleblower Protection Improvement Act (H.R. 2988), which would “strengthen protections for federal employees who expose wrongdoing.”
- On September 29<sup>th</sup>, the Senate passed legislation to continue funding the government until December 16<sup>th</sup>. The House passed the bill on September 30<sup>th</sup> and President Biden then signed it later that day. The legislation also contains additional funding for domestic disaster recovery and help for Ukraine.

### Other News:

- On September 26<sup>th</sup>, Mike Causey, long time Federal News Network host and columnist and a fixture in the Washington, D.C. news scene for more than half a century, died at the age of 82.
- On September 27, 2022, President Biden announced that, for the first time in a decade, the standard premium for Medicare Part B would be lower in 2023. The standard monthly premium for Medicare Part B will be \$164.90 in 2023, a decrease of \$5.20. This is good news for those enrolled in Medicare Part B. Medicare Open Enrollment for 2023 will begin on October 15, 2022 and ends on December 7, 2022.

## STATE LEGISLATION – CHRIS GIESELER

General Assembly. The Virginia House of Delegates has adjourned for the year, and the state Senate recessed and can be called back to session. Meanwhile, Members of the General Assembly have started pre-filing their legislative proposals for the new session of the legislature that will begin on January 11, 2023. The 2022 Virginia General Assembly passed a law giving taxpayers who filed 2021 individual income tax returns, and had a tax liability, a rebate up to \$250 for an individual and up to \$500 for a married couple filing jointly.

There will be a special election for local District 35 on January 10, 2023, to fill the vacancy in the Virginia House of Delegates. The vacancy occurred with Delegate Mark Keam resigned the position effective September 6, 2022. I am aware of one person who has announced his candidacy for the position. That person is Karl Frisch, a Democrat from Falls Church, who has previously served as the Providence District member on the Fairfax County School Board.

Virginia Federation of NARFE State Legislative Activity. Debbie Fisk, State Legislative Chair, VFN, assisted by the State Legislative Team, has been contacting various members' staffs of the General Assembly to explain the VFN Legislative Plan for 2023. In her discussions with legislators and staff, she has been emphasizing the first point of that Plan, which regards exempting from Virginia income tax a portion of Civil Service Retirement System pensions. Currently, all these benefits are taxed. By contrast, Federal Employees Retirement System retirees, who get an annuity and Social Security benefits, do not pay tax on the Social Security portion of their retirement benefits.



Ms. Fisk (pictured here with Chapter President Kathy Arpa) attended our Chapter's September 13<sup>th</sup> Membership meeting and provided us with copies of the "VFN Virginia 2023 State Legislative Plan" brochure. She then explained the process of how the Plan was put together and the efforts being taken to find sponsors for legislation for the General Assembly's upcoming session to implement the Plan. (I have noted that several bills have been prefiled or were carried over from the 2022 regular session of the General Assembly that address several items on the Plan: nursing home standards, family care giver credits, and increases in Virginia's standard deduction; but I have not analyzed the bills yet.)

### NEWS FROM NARFE HEADQUARTERS

William "Bill" Shackelford of Centreville, VA, was elected the National President of NARFE. His two-year term begins January 1, 2023.

Kathryn Hensley was re-elected as NARFE National Secretary/Treasurer. She was unopposed in seeking a third term.

Robert Allen, was elected regional vice president of Region X, representing Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

**Personnel Changes:** Dave Bowman, the former Senior Director, Membership Development, and Erin Carter, the former Director of Programs at NARFE, have both resigned. Erin will go to the National Motor Freight Traffic Association as their Director of Programs and Events. There is a hiring freeze in place right now so necessary alternatives will be put in place to handle their former duties until the hiring freeze is lifted.



A reminder that early voting is underway for the congressional midterm elections. Candidates for the 8th, 10th and 11th Congressional Districts will be on the Nov. 8 general election ballot, along with the Town of Herndon Council and mayor.

Three locations will be open for early voting on weekdays:

- [North County Governmental Center](#), Reston: 1 to 7 PM
- [Fairfax County Government Center](#), Fairfax: 8 AM to 4:30 PM
- [Mount Vernon Governmental Center](#), Alexandria: 1 to 7 PM

These locations will be the only places available for early voting until October 27, when an [additional 13 sites](#) will open.

Any registered voter can cast their ballot at any early voting site. The last day to vote early is November 5, at 5 PM.