



Midlothian Chapter 2265 NEWSLETTER

Serving Current and Retired Federal Employees Since 1921

Chapter e-mail: narfe2265df@gmail.com

September/October 2021

2021 Chapter 2265 Officers

President: Cindy Graunke

Vice President: Don Utton

Secretary: Lynn Osborne (*temporary appointment*)

Treasurer: Ed Heflin

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Cindy Graunke

At our August meeting, our program talked about being prepared. As I write this the rain is coming down at 1-3" an hour and there is a tornado watch. If you weren't able to tune in to the program, you may view the slide show presentation on our website.

One of the take-aways was to prepare financial information that is available in case you need to evacuate. Luckily, if you have filled out your "Be Prepared" NARFE document, you will be ahead of the game. Another take-away is to have a whistle in your emergency preparedness stash. Why? If you need to get the attention of rescuers, a whistle is more sustainable than yelling.

I want to talk about our Chapter being prepared for next year. As you may know, my term as your President will end in December. This is an opportunity to lead and make a difference. What does the job entail?

- Holding monthly meetings (The agendas are fairly standard).
- Lead the Chapter's Executive Board – Meetings are held quarterly.
- Communicating with the Area Vice President on Chapter activities and oversight of the Newsletter.

We are also in need of a secretary. Those duties include preparing minutes for both the Board and Chapter meetings.

There are people to help, including me. However, it is critical that we fill the positions in order to continue to be a Chapter in the Virginia Federation.

NATIONAL LEGISLATION

Don Utton

Fair COLA for Seniors

On July 1, Rep. John Garamendi, D-CA, reintroduced the Fair COLA for Seniors Act, H.R. 4315, which would change the basis of the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) calculation from the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) to the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E). It has been referred to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs, Oversight and Reform, and Armed Services.

The CPI-W considers spending habits of younger workers who are more likely to spend their dollars on electronic devices and consumer goods. Seniors are more likely to spend money on medical services and housing expenses. The prices of these items rise significantly higher than what the CPI-W calculates.

Previous versions of this proposed legislation have been considered by the House of Representatives since at least 2016 (114th Congress) but have died in committee.

The NARFE Legislative Action Center has a sample message you can modify and send your representative to urge her or his support of this proposed legislation: [NARFE Legislative Action Center – NARFE](#)

CONGRESSIONAL UPDATES

Bob Zombron

CDL VA 7th Congressional District

REP. SPANBERGER PROGRESS

Bills requested to congress for passage often take a long and arduous journey. When our member of congress supports us by sponsoring a bill – it doesn't mean that it will suddenly become law. Before the bill arrives for a vote it has to go through various committees such as Ways and Means – can it be supported financially etc.

Then it usually is not voted upon unless there are enough votes by the members to pass the bill. If it is approved – it goes to the senate for a similar process. Once agreed by both legislative bodies it will be submitted to the President for approval or be vetoed.

Recently I wrote Representative Spanberger in regard to her progress on specific NARFE priorities. Two of the five priorities have already been addressed by the congresswoman. As reported in the previous newsletter, HR 82 – Social Security Fairness Act; and HR 2337 – Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act bills have been cosponsored.

Additionally, I have requested her to cosponsor additional bills in the hopper. I requested action for the HR 3076 - Postal Service Reform Act of 2021. This bill may require an amendment since NARFE was concerned about its impact as written. The bills approval as written may drive up the cost of health insurance because it does not require Medicare for Postal employees. Details need to be worked out before a final sponsorship request.

The other bill, HR 4315 - Equal COLA for Seniors Act also requires sponsorships. If this bill gets traction, it will change the way Social Security is calculated. Ask your congressman to vote to switch to CPI-E which better reflects cost of living expenses for retired people. The CPI-W for urban wage earners and clerical staff, presently used, is not sufficient, especially with projected cost rises and apparent inflation.

I will continue to keep an eye on progress that is achieved by Representatives Spanberger, McEachin and Scott. Thus far, they all have a very good record in supporting NARFE priorities. There are many more issues to consider in addition to the bills previously noted. Patience and persistence is required to move forward. Meanwhile you are challenged to get in touch with your congressman to tell your story and your particular needs. They are waiting to hear from you.

RECOMMENDED READING

The August issue of the NARFE Magazine has several articles which have exceptional merit.

The article “The High Stakes Census” by David Tobenkin gives us insight into how our data driven society uses the national census for gathering information for those who govern in our democracy and private industry as well. It provides a source for accountability in our free society.

In “Savvy Advocacy-Getting Your Legislators’ Attention” by Stephanie Vance – let your legislators know what you believe you need. They won't know unless you tell them.

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

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

PROGRAMS

Verona McLeod

The board continues to present programs which we think would be of interest to the membership. It was also thought that attendance at the virtual meetings would reflect a good turnout. Unfortunately, that has not been the case. Attendance at “in person” meetings prior to the pandemic had decreased and the thought was that some people just did not want to attend a meeting. Well, we’ve learned that there must be another reason why there is little participation because not only did members not attend the “in person” meetings but they don’t attend the virtual meetings either. Our web coordinator has made it convenient for you to either join us via ZOOM or telephone. She has also started sending early announcements about the upcoming meeting and speaker so that you can put it on your calendar. She also sends a reminder a day or two prior to the actual meeting. Nothing seems to create enthusiasm. In any event, you have missed some insightful speakers and presentations. We had a speaker to discuss getting the best out of your Medicare benefits. Another discussed the Virginia 211 program. Our July speaker was a librarian and provided quite a

bit of information that we did not know. Did you know that you can get a personal dedicated librarian to assist you in doing research, etc.? Well, you can. Our most recent speaker, from the Chesterfield EMS, discussed Emergency Preparedness. That’s something that we all should have taken interest in during this Hurricane season. Maybe after reading about some of the great presentations that you’ve missed, we can interest you in the programs for the remainder of the year. Our September program will be presented by the Chesterfield Police Department, Crime Prevention Unit. They will be discussing how to protect your valuables through the Smartwater CSI program. Kathy Bass, Blue Cross Blue Shield, will be our October speaker discussing the 2022 updates to your FEGHI. We’re hoping to be back to “in person” meetings soon and can have our November Alzheimer’s fund raiser. There is nothing definite planned for December at this time but stay tuned. We’ll let you know.

Program suggestions are always welcomed!

MEMBERSHIP

Verona McLeod

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO KEEP OUR CHAPTER AS A VIABLE ORGANIZATION

Chapter membership chairpersons met with the VFN President and the VFN Membership chair to discuss the state of our organization’s membership. I am sure you all realize that our current membership’s average age is greater than 70. Therefore, if we want to continue to have NARFE advocate and lobby on our behalf we need to recruit new members who can take up the baton and follow in the footsteps of those who are continuing to support the organization but need to step back some. We need everyone who’s reading this newsletter to think about family, friends, and friends of friends who are or know of others who can join our organization and continue the fight for the benefits that we worked for during our careers. For those who are currently working please don’t think for a minute that your benefits are safe. We all continue to be at the greatest risk of losing our benefits at any time. So please help us in our recruitment efforts. Also, if you are one of the many who have dropped your chapter

membership in favor of national membership, please reconsider and join or return to our chapter 2265. We need your help.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

SEPTEMBER

3 Thang Pham; **7** Carolyn Matthews; **15** John Gamble; **19** Jennie Lekacos; **22** Roy McLeod; **27** Sylvia Coleman; **29** Judy Archer;

OCTOBER

1 Genevieve Hite; **6** Sheila Hecker; **8** Mary Gross, Joyce Burton; **14** James Bradley, George Reynolds; **18** Mary Faris; **22** Virginia Helmick; **27** Bill Stoken, Cynthia Graunke; **31** Michael Fabrizio

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Lynn Osborne, Secretary

NARFE Midlothian Chapter 2265

Monthly Meeting Minutes, July 14, 2021

The Monthly meeting of the Midlothian Chapter 2265 was virtually via Zoom on Wednesday, July 14, 2021. President Cindy Graunke called the meeting to order at 10:04 am and welcomed everyone to the NARFE meeting. There were 13 members present and 1 guest (Ruth Stubbs).

Pledge of Allegiance: Members repeated the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Introduction of Guests: There was one guest present.

Birthdays/Illnesses: President Graunke announced the birthdays.

Thought of the Day: Ann Simpkins brought Thoughts of the Day. Words of Wisdom – Be Kind, Be Kind and Be Kind!

Officer Reports:

Treasurer: Ed Heflin reported the financial status of the chapter.

Secretary: The minutes from the June meeting were in the newsletter and approved.

Vice President: Don Utton – No Report

President: President Graunke reminded members of the upcoming VFN Conference in October. She is in charge of the Greeters and welcomes any volunteers. Each Chapter is asked to prepare a basket for the Silent Auction to benefit Alzheimer's, value of \$50. Cathy Dorsett volunteered to put the basket together. Lynn has updated the Chapter Ad and submitted to the Conference Chair. Fourteen members have signed up to attend the Conference.

Committee Reports:

Alzheimer's: Faye McKay – In Faye's absence Debbie reported on the new Alzheimer's drug which is promising, however, there are some concerns with it.

Membership: Verona reported she has been able to get into the National reports which are showing 223 members. It also shows National members who are in the area of Chapter 2265. She would like to have access to the names of those National members. She is working on this.

Net Coordinator: Deborah Fisk continues to work to find key personnel to help out with issues we have with the National Database. We've been told a new email system will be integrated with the new database soon completely eliminating the NES System. She is working on a new website for Chapter 2265.

NARFE-PAC: Bob Zombron – No Report

National Legislation: In Don's absence, Debbie reported the congressional representatives were asked to cosponsor the following bills:

HR 82 and S 1302 – Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) & Government Pension Offset (GPO)

HR 2337 – Reform WEP & GPO

HR 304 – Equal COLA Act

The Fair COLA for Seniors Act

HR 3076 – Postal Reform Act of 2021 and **S-1770**

HR 131 – Recognizing NARFE on the 100th Anniversary

Programs: Verona McLeod – The August program will be on preparedness by Chesterfield Emergency

Management; September will be on crime, Smart Water; October will be BCBS.

Special Activities: Lynn Osborne – Trips are still on hold.

State Legislation: Steve Stastny thanked Debbie Fisk for all the work she has done with the VFN State Legislation Committee. She reported 5 items were approved at the VFN Board of Directors meeting to present to the 2022 Virginia General Assembly:

1. Exempting a Segment of CRCS Pensions Equivalent to Social Security Retirement
2. Age Deduction
3. Family Care Giver Tax Credit
4. Minimum Nursing Home Standards
5. Income Tax Subtraction for Retiree Health Insurance Premiums

Hospitality: Cathy Dorsett – Reported she will work on what refreshment we can have at the September in-person meeting.

Unfinished Business:

There was positive feedback on the June Chapter Picnic

New Business:

Program: The program was presented by Ruth Stubbs, Branch Manager North Chesterfield Library.

The next membership meeting will be August 11, 2021.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 pm

Alzheimer’s Drugs

Debbie Fisk

Comments Re Aduhelm

from Alzheimer’s Association, June 7, 2021

This message is sent to all Alzheimer's Association and Alzheimer's Impact Movement board members, all Alzheimer's Association staff, and volunteers and supporters of AIM and the Alzheimer's Association.

The Alzheimer’s Association welcomes and celebrates today’s historic Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval of aducanumab for the treatment of Alzheimer’s disease.

While certainly not a cure, this is the first ever FDA-approved treatment for the underlying biology of

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
October, 2021					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11 Columbus Day Indigenous People's Day	12	13 Navy Birthday	14	15 White Cane Safety Day	16
Virginia Federal Conference – October 10 th through October 13 th						
17	18	19	20 Membership Meeting, 10am*	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31 Halloween	*Membership Meetings will be held at Hopewell UMC, 6200 Courthouse Rd, Chesterfield, VA 23832					

Alzheimer's, not just the symptoms. Slowing progression for those with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) due to Alzheimer's disease or Alzheimer's dementia in its earliest stage offers the potential for more precious time for diagnosed individuals and their loved ones.

This new treatment approval and sustained progress in the research field benefit from years of investment and relentless dedication to our vision of a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia.

The advances the Alzheimer's Association has been able to drive on behalf of our constituents, to bring us to this historic moment, are thanks to you and others who have been so supportive. I am deeply grateful to you for the role you have played to make this day possible. Thank you!

With your support, the Alzheimer's Association has advanced research in many ways, including directly funding the tools for early detection that have facilitated development of new treatments.

Of course, as I'm sure you realize, our work is not done. The fight to end Alzheimer's is as urgent as ever. As the leader in the quest to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia, you can be assured that the Alzheimer's Association will fight to ensure access to this treatment and ultimately others for all communities. We won't stop until the day our vision becomes reality for everyone.

I look forward to sharing more with you as this treatment becomes available and others advance. I hope you can join us for a special volunteer meeting on Tuesday, June 8 at 5 p.m. CT. To add the event to your calendar, click one of these links: [Google Calendar](#) | [Outlook/Hotmail Calendar](#) | [iCal/Other Calendar](#)

Thank you again, as always, for everything you have done and everything you continue to do to drive our mission advances and to make a difference today and tomorrow for so many others.

Sincerely,

Harry Johns
Chief Executive Officer

Biogen's Alzheimer's drug has been the subject of much controversy.

July 9, 2021

The head of the Food and Drug Administration asked the agency's watchdog on Friday to determine if any interactions between a biotechnology company and FDA officials were inappropriate in the review process for an Alzheimer's drug that has been the subject of controversy.

Acting FDA Commissioner Dr. Janet Woodcock sent a letter to the acting Health and Human Services Department inspector general following several controversies surrounding the review process for Biogen's drug Aduhelm that was approved on June 7. This was FDA's first approval for an Alzheimer's treatment since 2003. The drug was given "accelerated approval," which is expedited approval for an unmet medical need, against advice from FDA's own advisory committee in November and other medical experts.

"As you know there has been significant attention and controversy surrounding the process for review for Biogen's biologics license application," which "includes an ongoing focus on interactions between Biogen and [FDA] staff during the review process," Woodcock wrote. Therefore, she asked for an independent review of the interactions between agency and Biogen staff during the process "to determine whether any of those interactions were inconsistent with FDA policies and procedures."

Woodcock said she has great confidence in the "integrity of the staff and leadership" at the agency's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research that were involved; however, she noted there have been concerns raised about communications that possibly happened "outside the formal correspondence process." She said the agency will fully cooperate should the IG take up the probe, which she said she would like to happen "as soon as possible."

HHS IG Spokesperson Tesia Williams said in a statement, "We received the letter and are reviewing it for appropriate action. We do not have any further comments at this time."

A Biogen spokesperson said, “We will, of course, cooperate with any inquiry in connection with a possible review of the regulatory process.”

According to *Stat News*, it’s “rare” for an IG to probe the FDA and even more so for it to look at a specific drug approval.

“Earlier calls for an OIG investigation have focused on the close relationship between Billy Dunn, head of the FDA’s neuroscience division, and Biogen executives,” said *Stat’s* report. “Biogen had an off-the-books meeting with Dunn in May 2019, enlisting his support for the treatment that would become Aduhelm. A month later, Dunn and his FDA colleagues proposed using a regulatory shortcut called accelerated approval to get the drug approved, contradicting the agency’s claim that it raised that option only this past March. The FDA was so supportive of Aduhelm that, even in 2019, some inside Biogen believed its approval was inevitable.”

The letter comes a day after the FDA limited its recommendation on who should receive the drug. “This is a welcome step and addresses one of many problems with this drug approval,” tweeted Dr. Aaron Kesselheim, professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. “But the FDA/Biogen should be doing much more now to help patients by actively combatting misperceptions about this drug.” He was one of three advisory committee members to resign in wake of the FDA’s approval of Aduhelm.

Last month, the top lawmakers on the House Oversight and Reform Committee and Energy and Commerce Committee launched an investigation into the approval as well as the pricing of the drug.

“We have serious concerns about the steep price of Biogen’s new Alzheimer’s drug Aduhelm and the process that led to its approval despite questions about the drug’s clinical benefit,” they said in a statement on June 25. “We strongly support innovative treatments to help the millions of Americans who suffer from Alzheimer’s disease, but Aduhelm’s approval and its \$56,000 annual price tag will have broader implications for seniors, providers and taxpayers that warrant close examination.”

July 12, 2021

This message is sent to all Alzheimer's Association and Alzheimer's Impact Movement board members, all Alzheimer's Association staff, Zenith Society members and volunteers and supporters of AIM and the Alzheimer's Association.

As you know, the Alzheimer’s Association has advocated strongly for approval of aducanumab, now called Aduhelm, which received accelerated approval from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on June 7. This treatment, while not a cure, has the potential to give more time to those with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) due to Alzheimer’s or those with early stage Alzheimer’s dementia.

Thanks to your strong support of our work in so many ways, this is the first treatment ever to achieve such approval to address Alzheimer’s disease itself, not just the symptoms.

Since I last communicated with you about the approval, much has happened. The FDA has now clarified the people who would likely benefit from this new treatment. It is the same group I described above and the group that the Alzheimer’s Association has advocated to have access to this treatment throughout the approval process.

Achieving access to treatment for those who would likely benefit is now our focus.

Regrettably, Biogen, the company that developed Aduhelm, priced it at \$56,000 annually. That is simply unacceptable. The Alzheimer’s Association continues to call on the company to change that price. To fail to do so would deny access for many who could benefit.

To achieve access for this treatment, and other treatments that will one day follow, the Alzheimer’s Association is committed to working with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), as well as health insurance companies and others in the private payer community, to expedite coverage and access.

You might have also heard that there have been multiple calls for investigation of the approval process for Aduhelm. The Alzheimer’s Association strongly

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NARFE

Midlothian Chapter 2265

Member Profile

Name: _____ Date: _____

Month and day of birth: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Member ID Number: _____

Date Retired (if applicable): _____

From which agency did you retire: _____

If still working, Agency name: _____

Job title: _____

Hobbies/Interests: _____

Are you willing to volunteer your services to assist our Chapter in any of the following capacities?

*Chapter Officer___, Membership___, Programs___, Alzheimer's___, Technology___, Special Activities___, Hospitality___, Legislation___, Greeter___, Speaker___
(Please complete and mail to address below or bring to Chapter meeting)*

Do you have comments?

Membership Committee
NARFE Midlothian Chapter 2265
P. O. Box 565
Midlothian, VA 23113

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supports such inquiries to reassure all of us that treatment approval processes work the way they should.

We firmly believe that the FDA's accelerated approval was the right decision, given the publicly available science, especially for such a devastating and fatal disease — one that otherwise has no treatment to even slow it down. Having the availability of such an option and access to it are needs we've long heard from the patient and caregiver community that we serve.

You can be assured that the Alzheimer's Association will continue to advocate for coverage of this now approved treatment for everyone who is likely to benefit.

Thank you so much for all of your support to make it possible to improve the lives of so many others!

Sincerely,



Harry Johns
Chief Executive Officer

On the Road with Lynn

This COVID 19 pandemic just keeps going on and on and on. I'm sure many of you are just as frustrated with it as much as I am. I love to travel, as many of you do, but just don't feel comfortable in a closed-in location, such as a motor coach, with people I don't know where they've been or even if they are vaccinated.



For now, I'm going to watch the numbers and look forward to 2022 for something we can do early next year. In the meantime, continue to wear your mask, socially distance and as always, BE SAFE!

Oh, and don't forget your annual Flu Shot!!

Stay safe and well!

Lynn - 804.275.2102 or jcolmo68@comcast.net

"It is only through labor and painful effort, by grim energy and resolute courage, that we move on to better things."

- Theodore Roosevelt

Chapter 2265 Committees

Alzheimer's:

Faye McKay
804-378-0826

Audit:

Shirley Alexander
804-275-8405

Chaplain:

In memory of
Charlie Wilson

Greeter:

Pat Warhurst
804-658-1208

Hospitality:

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

Membership:

Pat Warhurst
804-658-1208

National Legislation:

Don Utton
804-896-1804

Net Coordinator:

Deborah Fisk
804-748-8722

Newsletter:

Lynn Osborne
804-275-2102

Parliamentarian:

Lynn Osborne
804-275-2102

Programs:

Verona McLeod
804-744-4589

Public Relations:

Norma Smith
804-379-6712

Service Officer:

Virginia Bozarth
804-275-0820

Special Activities:

Lynn Osborne
804-275-2102

State Legislation:

Steve Stastny
804-271-8690

Sunshine:

Pat Warhurst
804-658-1208

Telephone Tree:

Vacant



FEDERAL BENEFITS EXPERTS

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SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
September, 2021			1	2	3	4
5	6 Labor Day	7	8 Membership Meeting, 10am Hopewell UMC	9	10	11 Patriot Day
12 National Grandparents Day	13	14	15	16 Yom Kipper	17 Constitution Day, Citizenship Day	18 Air Force Birthday
19	20	21	22 September Equinox	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		