



NARFE Chapter 1116 Newsletter

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



DECEMBER 2022

Next Chapter Meeting
Tuesday, December 13, 2022
Pan Am Family Restaurant
11:30 AM
3051 Nutley Street
Fairfax, VA 22031

Next Board Meeting
Thursday, January 26, 2023
1 PM
Vienna Community Center

2022 Board

Chapter Officers

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

1st 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

The days are getting shorter. We had a taste of winter, winter coats feel good, and soon we will say goodbye to 2022 and *hello to 2023!*

We had a good turnout for our Chapter Meeting on November 8th with guest speaker Michele Nisbett-Johnson from Blue Cross. See Secretary's Report on page 3.

Our last NARFE event of the year will be our Chapter Holiday Party on Tuesday, December 13th at Pan Am Family Restaurant at 11:30 a.m. See details on page 2.

I would like to thank Dave, Chris and Daad for putting this newsletter together while I was vacationing in Florida. I would also like to thank Mary Margaret McGowan, who is stepping down as our Service Officer, for her dedication and support of our chapter. I would like to welcome Susan Larson as our new Service Officer and Daad Pierce as our new Newsletter Editor, effective January 1, 2023.



Several of us will attend the 75th Anniversary of Chapter 7 (Arlington) on December 8. **Congratulations** for 75 years of service to NARFE members!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS.

Kathy

MEMBERSHIP REPORT – JAYNE SEIDMAN

We currently have 177 Chapter Members and 148 National Members in our area, for a total of 325 NARFE members in our area. Welcome to Ms. Pat Bradley, our newest Chapter Member.

COMING UP

December 13 – 11:30 a.m. – Our Chapter Holiday Party and Installation of 2023 Officers. See details below.

January 10, 2023 – Chapter Meeting – 1 PM – Vienna Community Center. The program entitled “**HOW TO USE UBER AND LYFT TO GET A RIDE**” will be presented by Vienna Parks and Recreation staff- Derrick Cowles and Gagan Sandu. With transport ordered directly from your smartphone and paid for automatically, Uber and Lyft make getting around here and elsewhere as easy as tapping a button. Whether you are taking your first Uber ride or your hundredth, this presentation will give you some tips to make sure your ride experience is as smooth as possible. The presenters will assist attendees with getting the apps loaded on their cell phones.

DECEMBER 13 HOLIDAY PARTY UPDATE



The Party will begin at 11:30 AM

The Chapter’s annual Holiday Party will be held in the private room in the left rear of the **Pan Am Restaurant** (same location as last year). It will **begin at 11:30 AM**. The address is 3051 Nutley St. Fairfax, VA 22031 (in the Pan Am Shopping Center at the intersection of Lee Highway [Route 29] and Nutley Street). The restaurant is located between the Safeway and CVS stores. There is ample parking in the shopping center’s parking lot.

If you have ***not yet signed up*** for the party, please call Jayne Seidman at 703-938-2274 or Dave Graf at 703-938-2962 **no later than Monday, December 12, 2022**. **Guests are welcome**. Attendees will order off the menu, vegan and vegetarian dishes will be available, there will be separate checks and the swearing-in of the Chapter officers for 2023 will take place.

We will be accepting donations of cash or checks for **Toys for Tots** or the **Committee for Helping Others** (CHO), a Vienna-based charity for the needy of Vienna, Oakton, Dunn Loring, and Merrifield. We will also have the popular 50/50 drawing for NARFE-Alzheimer’s Research and door prizes. Donations for **Alzheimer’s Research** will also be collected.

SERVICE OFFICER REPORT – MARY MARGARET MCGOWAN

Remember, the FEHB and FEDVIP open season expires midnight ET on Monday, December 12. If you do not make a change, you will have to wait until November of 2023. For any other questions, you will have to contact OPM.Retire@opm.gov or 1-888-767-6728.

The January Cost of Living increase (COLA) for Social Security and CSRS will be 8.7%. The increase for FERS will be 7.7%.

TREASURER'S REPORT – DAVE GRAF

Since the November Newsletter, we received \$214.26 for membership dues collected by NARFE's National Headquarters for October. There have not been any expenses. I will make a \$150.00 donation (as authorized in the approved Chapter budget) to the Town of Vienna, Parks, and Recreation for use of the Community Center meeting rooms this year.

The 50/50 drawing for Alzheimer's Research raised \$73.00 at the November Membership meeting. A Chapter member also donated \$100.00 to the Alzheimer's Research Fund. These donations will be sent to the VFN Coordinator for the NARFE Alzheimer's Research Fund. Total donations thus far this year have been \$695.50.

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 their checks payable to **NARFE-Alzheimer's Research** and include **Chapter 1116** on the memo line. Bring your cash or checks to our December 13th Holiday Party or send your checks to me at:

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

SECRETARY'S REPORT OF NOVEMBER 8TH CHAPTER MEETING – DAVE GRAF

The Chapter's Membership Meeting was held on November 8, 2022, at the Vienna Community Center. The meeting was called to order at 1:05 PM by President Kathy Arpa. Our five military veterans in attendance (pictured) led us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Two of our newest members and a member of the McLean-Great Falls Chapter attended the meeting.

Programs Chair Ralph Dantinne introduced our guest speaker Michele Nesbitt-Johnson, CareFirst MSA BlueCross BlueShield (BC/BS) (pictured here). She is with CareFirst MSA BlueCross BlueShield (BC/BS). She distributed a booklet containing 2023 benefit information specifically for Annuitants. It addresses all 3 of the BC/BS plans – Blue Focus, Basic Option and Standard Option.



First, she discussed the health insurance advantages that we have as Federal employees and Annuitants. Next, she discussed the benefit and premium rate changes for 2023 for each of the three BC/BS plans. Michele (pictured) then described the 4 parts of Medicare and how the coverage of each BC/BS plan works with each of the Medicare enrollment choices. Lastly, she discussed the value-added programs/services that are available to all BC/BS enrollees. Access to most of these services is via enrollment in “My Blue.” The value-added programs are vision care discounts, non-covered drug discounts, routine foot care, hearing aid benefits, a wellness incentive program, a 24-hour nurse line and 24-hour telehealth access.



A printed copy of the benefit booklet for any of the 3 BC/BS plans can be requested from BC/BS at 1-800-411-2583 or downloaded from www.fepblue.org/brochure. The online Provider Directory can be accessed at www.fepblue.org/provider. There is also an “fepblue” app for cell phones which can be downloaded from your cell phone’s app store. You will need to have a My Blue account to access most of the app’s features. This can be done by accessing www.fepblue.org/signup. It is a secure, members-only website that lets you view claim history, track out-of-pocket costs, access health and wellness tools, etc.

Michele stated that during Open Season, there are virtual webcasts that go into detail for each of the 3 BC/BS plans. In the question-and-answer period that followed her presentation, Michele explained that BC/BS provides coverage overseas, world-wide. There is a separate Overseas Administrator that helps locate a provider, do translations, and provides pre-authorizations. All overseas providers are considered to be “Participating Providers” for claim processing purposes. She noted that Medicare benefits are not available overseas, except in US territories like Puerto Rico.



The Business Meeting was called to order at 1:48 pm by President Kathy Arpa. Nominating Committee Co-Chair Susan Larson (pictured) conducted the election of Chapter officers for 2023.

After she read the list of nominees for each of the 5 offices, Susan asked for additional nominees from the floor for each position. There were no nominations from the floor. The following were elected, by acclamation:

President – Kathy Arpa
1st Vice President – Ralph Dantine
2nd Vice President – Jayne Seidman

Secretary – Chris Gieseler
Treasurer – Dave Graf

The elected officers will be installed by Ted Pasek, NARFE Area X Vice President at the Chapter’s Holiday Party on December 13th.

Dave Graf provided an update for the Holiday Party to be held on Tuesday, December 13th. Due to space concerns at the Glory Days restaurant, the Board recommends that the party location change to the Pan Am Restaurant, the site of last year's party. The new owner has promised separate checks, ordering from the menu, faster service, and the availability of vegan and vegetarian dishes. A motion was made and seconded and the attendees at the meeting voted to accept the change in location.

After a break, the Business Meeting was reconvened at 2:17 PM. Dave Graf read the Secretary's Report for the October 11th Membership Meeting and gave the current Treasurer's Report. Kathy gave the Membership Report that we have 180 Chapter members and 146 National members in our area for a total of 326 members. She announced that we have three new members.

Chris Gieseler read the National Legislation Report that highlighted recent Congressional and agency activity relevant to our members. He also reported that at the state level, there has been no legislative activity of note. Sunshine Chair Harriet Epstein gave the Sunshine Report. Our long-time member Shirley Martin was recently recognized by the Town of Vienna as the "Gravy Lady". Program Chair Ralph Dantine discussed the remaining meetings for 2022 and certain other area meetings of note. Service Officer Mary Margaret McGowan urged everyone to vote, including the January 10th Special Election to fill the vacancy in the Virginia House of Delegates seat for the 35th House District.

Kathy announced that Daad Pierce will be our Newsletter Editor beginning in January 2023. Kathy also announced that Susan Larson will assume the duties of Service Officer in January 2023.

Margaret Murphy conducted the 50/50 Raffle for the NARFE Alzheimer's Research Fund. She also conducted raffles for a plant donated by Ralph Dantine and several door prizes donated by Michele Nesbitt-Johnson on behalf of BC/BS.

Upon a motion made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 2:51 PM.

LEGISLATION REPORTS –CHRIS GIESELER/DAAD PIERCE

Virginia Legislation:

A Special Election will be held in the 7th Virginia Senate District (Hampton Roads area) to fill the vacancy created when State Senator Jennifer Kiggans resigned her position. She resigned due to her election to the US House of Representatives for the 118th Congress. The Special Election will take place on January 10, 2023, the day before the General Assembly begins its regular session.

Another Special Election that will take place the same day to fill the vacancy in the Virginia House of Delegates District 35. This vacancy occurred when Mark Keam resigned to accept a position in the Biden Administration. Our Chapter has a number of constituents in House District 35.

Both major parties have chosen candidates for each of the special elections.

In preparation for the start of the 2023 General Assembly session, the Virginia Federation of NARFE 's State Legislation Chair is contacting state legislators and staffs on the primary focus of the VFN's 2023 Legislative Plan, the elimination of most of the Virginia income tax levied on Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) retirement benefits. The reduction of state tax on those benefits would make the tax treatment of CSRS benefits more comparable to the taxation of benefits under the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS). One aspect of FERS benefits is Social Security coverage. Social Security benefits are not subject to Virginia income tax. Thus, a large portion of FERS benefits is not taxed by Virginia, whereas all of the CSRS benefits are taxed. This is an unfair situation that the new General Assembly needs to address.

National Legislation:

- The lame-duck Senate and House of Representatives members are back in session working through several pieces of legislation, including:
 - A short-term or a year-long Continuing Resolution to fund the government by December 16th to avert a shutdown.
 - H.R. 82 (which would eliminate WEP/GPO) and still awaits floor action. NARFE is pushing members to contact Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Hoyer and House Ways and Means Chairman Richard Neal and Ranking Member Kevin Brady to encourage them to act.
 - The National Defense Authorization Act, or NDAA, the annual must-pass legislation that sets the policy agenda and authorizes funding for the Department of Defense.
- On November 17th, the Senate passed the NARFE-endorsed H.R. 521 (First Responder Fair RETIRE Act) by unanimous consent. The bill now is with President Biden for his signature. The legislation would enable federal first responders injured in the line of duty to remain in the public safety retirement system should they continue their federal service in a new role.
- On November 28th, Congressman Donald McEachin passed away. Last month he had been reelected for the 118th Congress to represent Virginia's 4th Congressional District (Richmond area). Governor Youngkin is required to announce a Special Election for a replacement, but Virginia law does not specify a date for such action.

Other News:

- On December 1st, OPM issued a rule that will enable government agencies to hire employees in certain STEM positions on a temporary basis for up to 10 years, more than doubling the current cap limiting the assignments for those workers.
- The Office of Personnel Management said it will suspend all new applications to the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP) on December 19th for the next 2 years. The agency needs time to try to mitigate the increasing costs of premiums.

SUNSHINE REPORT – HARRIET EPSTEIN

We are sending “get well” wishes to Anne Shea, who has been under the weather. Our own Shirley Martin is featured in a YouTube video production recently created by the Town of Vienna citing her many years of service as the “Gravy Lady” at American Legion Post 180 in Vienna. The “What’s Your Story?” video interview is available on the Town’s YouTube channel at <https://bit.ly/GravyLady>.

If you know of someone who needs a little sunshine, please let me know. You can call me at 703-560-4137.

WEBiNAR



A Federal Benefits Institute Webinar: **ESTATE PLANNING**

Wednesday, December 14, from 2 to 4 PM ET | 1 hour webinar, plus 1 hour Q&A
Non-member fee: \$48.00 (Cost includes one year of NARFE membership)

This webinar is free for NARFE members, but you must register to attend.

To sign up go to www.narfe.org. Look under Federal Benefits Institute for NARFE Webinars.

“Estate planning” may sound like it’s just for the wealthy, but it’s not. An effective estate plan specifies not only what happens upon your death, but also what happens if you’re incapacitated. It helps avoid messy legal battles and ensures state law doesn’t dictate who takes care of you and who gets your assets.

Whether you’re a current federal employee or a retiree, Mark Keen, CFP, will show you how to build an effective estate plan that specifically addresses your federal benefits.

This one-hour webinar will cover important topics like:

- Planning for death and incapacity—special considerations for federal benefits
- Strategies for avoiding probate
- How best to designate beneficiaries to ensure effective wealth transfer
- Understanding TSP beneficiary rules so that you and your beneficiaries maximize the tax advantages

A Q&A session will follow the presentation.

Smart estate planning helps protect your family and keep your heirs from overpaying taxes. Let NARFE help you put a structure in place to deal with incapacity and make sure your assets go to your beneficiaries in the most effective way possible.

