

**December 2022**



Email: narfe356@hotmail.com

# MANASSAS CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

NARFE Chapter 356, Manassas, VA - Organized September 9, 1953

## Annual Holiday/Christmas Party Meeting

### Next Meeting Date

**December 21**

*Hibachi Buffet & Sushi  
Grill at  
8121 Sudley Road,  
Manassas, VA*

**Buffet Lunch -  
11:30 AM**

**Program at  
12:15 PM**

Hibachi Buffet is located in the Westgate Shopping Center, next door to the Barnes and Noble Book Store.

Our December luncheon meeting will feature our annual holiday celebration party. As we have in past years, we will take up a collection of gifts to be presented for the Emergency Family Care Center at SERVE. As most of you know, SERVE is a local charity, operating through volunteer efforts, which helps many persons in need around this area. Please bring to the meeting gift cards from stores that sell food to help SERVE purchase items for its food cupboard.

enrolling or making changes to the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program, including the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Programs, ends December 12. NARFE's Fall Membership Drive continues to run until December 31, 2022. Current members can earn \$10 for each new member they recruit, as well as other prizes. December 23 is the deadline for filing a claim for payment from a class action settlement, if you were subject to the data breaches incurred in 2013 and 2014 by the Office of Personnel Management and its contractor and experienced out-of-pocket expenses. For additional information on the latter see [www.opmdatabreach.com](http://www.opmdatabreach.com).

### From The Chapter President

The Executive Committee joins me in wishing all of our members a Happy Holiday Season. Please consider taking a break from your holiday preparations to join us for some fun and fellowship at our annual Holiday Party Luncheon at the Hibachi on December 21.

Mary M. Brandt,  
Interim President

### INCLEMENT WEATHER

In case of inclement weather, we will follow the plans for Prince William County schools.

- If schools are closed, the meeting will be canceled.
- If schools are opening late, we will hold our meeting as usual.

### Future Meetings:

Chapter luncheon meetings have resumed on the third Wednesday of each month.

Our Executive Committee is now meeting virtually on the first Tuesday

Our first regular chapter meeting of the New Year will be on Wednesday, January 18 (remember we always meet on the third Wednesday of the month, with the option for lunch at 11:30 and a program at 12:15). Consider starting the New Year by joining us for our monthly luncheon meeting. If anyone knows of a speaker or a topic that might be of interest to our chapter members, please contact one of the officers listed on p. 5 of this Newsletter. We welcome your suggestions and input in to how to make our monthly meetings of greater interest to you.

Some deadlines of note this month include the following. Open Season for

### In Memoriam

*We deeply regret the passing on November 18 of our Chapter President Joseph A. Powell. Joe served as Chapter President from 2018 until this past August, when ill health forced him to step down from the position. Formerly, he served as Chapter Vice President and was a long-time member of the Chapter. We ask that you remember Joe and his family and keep them in your thoughts and prayers.*



## Legislation Update and News of Note

### First Responders Fair RETIRE Act

The Senate passed the NARFE-endorsed First Responder Fair RETIRE Act, H.R. 521, by unanimous consent on November 17. The bill now heads to President Joe Biden for his signature, as the House of Representatives passed the legislation in July of this year. H.R. 521 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.

Source: NARFE NewsLine, November 23, 2022

### Unfinished Business for the Lame Duck Session of Congress

While a new Congress will convene in January, current lawmakers are returning after the election with several items of business left to finish this year. The current Continuing Resolution to fund the government expires December 16 and Congress has yet to pass the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal year 2023. NARFE continues to advocate for the passage of H.R. 82, the Social Security Fairness Act, which would repeal the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). Regarding the latter, NARFE is targeting House leadership through a series of action letters and urges members to press their representatives using the letter on its website ([www.narfe.org/advocacy/legislative-action-center](http://www.narfe.org/advocacy/legislative-action-center)) or by calling their representatives using NARFE's toll-free advocacy line at 1-800-456-8410, option 5, to encourage action before the new Congress convenes in 2023. NARFE is also working to ensure passage of legislation in the Senate by the end of the year similar to that which has already passed the House to prevent a return of Schedule F and is encouraging members to join in these advocacy efforts by contacting their senators.

Source: NARFE NewsLine, November 16, 2022

### Government Funding for FY 2023

With negotiations on a FY 2023 spending package making little progress and the current continuing resolution (CR) set to expire on December 16, Democrats in Congress are moving forward to write

their own 2023 spending bill without Republican support, though Republican priorities are being included in hopes of eventually winning bipartisan support. Democratic leadership is considering a one-week stopgap extension to buy more time for an agreement on full-year funding. The December 23 deadline would bring Congress up against the holidays, providing an extra incentive for lawmakers to wrap up their work for the year. Without explicit Republican backing and input, however, that plan would likely face significant resistance. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) have agreed to seek a full-year omnibus rather than a longer-term CR. Some Republicans have pushed their leaders to avoid any full-year funding measures, instead suggesting Congress should pass a stopgap CR into next year when Republicans will take control of the House and gain more leverage in negotiations.

Source: Government Executive, November 29, 2022

### Suspension of Enrollment in the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP)

On November 10, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued a benefits administration letter to agencies informing them that they are suspending new applications for coverage in FLTCIP. This action does not alter existing policies. The suspension will remain for 24 months, barring any subsequent action by OPM. OPM is taking this step to assess the benefits offered and to establish sustainable premiums that reflect the cost of the benefits provided.

Source: NARFE NewsLine, November 16, 2022

## NARFE WEBINARS

### Upcoming NARFE Webinars:

#### **Estate Planning: Strategies for Feds**

**Wednesday, December 14 | 2 p.m. ET**

“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 money. 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.

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.

[REGISTER TODAY!](#)

### Recent Webinars:

#### **Which FEHB Plans Work Best with Medicare Parts A & B Thursday, November 17**

As an active or retired federal employee, turning 65 means two important things: you’re eligible for health coverage under both FEHB and Medicare, and you have a once in a lifetime opportunity to change health plans outside of Open Season—this can be your “do-over” if you want to change to a different plan before the next year. Some FEHB plans provide a health fund or Medicare reimbursement, while others waive cost sharing and have lower premiums. Many work well for couples who are over and under age 65, but plans can be expensive. The big question is: are they worth it? With so many choices, figuring out the right balance of coverages can be confusing. Let NARFE federal benefits expert Tammy Flanagan help remove the guesswork from your decision.

#### **Which FEHB Plan Is Right for You? – Retirees Without Medicare Edition**

**Thursday, November 3**

#### **Which FEHB Plan Is Right for You? – Active Employee Edition**

**Tuesday, October 25**

#### **Understanding Medicare Advantage Options**

**Thursday, October 13**

### **NARFE Webinars: Always Available Wherever and Whenever You Are**

NARFE members know the value of our Federal Benefits Institute webinars. Every month you can take charge of your federal benefits and prepare for a secure future with educational webinars that help you save money and enhance your life. Every webinar is recorded and archived, along with a transcript of the live Q&A session that follows.

As a NARFE member, you have exclusive access to those archived webinars, which cover a wide range of topics like TSP management strategies, retirement planning, choosing the right FEHB plan, the benefits of long-term care insurance and many more. The webinars are now even easier to access on NARFE’s new, user-friendly website.

[Click here](#) to find links to dozens of valuable, expert-led presentations that you can watch on demand, anytime, anywhere. And remember, this is just one of many exclusive NARFE resources available to help you get the most out of your federal benefits, and one of the many reasons it pays to be a NARFE member.

## Previous Chapter Meeting, November 16th

Chapter 356 held its regular monthly meeting, with 12 members and guests present, including Virginia Federation of NARFE Area IX Vice President Jim Little. Guest speaker, Delegate Danica Roem, representing Virginia's 13<sup>th</sup> House District in the Virginia General Assembly, spoke about the proposed construction of a large data center complex in North West Prince William County, referred to as the Prince William County (PWC) Digital Gateway, and fielded questions from the floor on a variety of topics of interest to members.

The PWC Digital Gateway is a controversial proposal to construct a technology corridor along Pageland Lane in Gainesville for the development of data center uses. The corridor, which originally included 27 parcels located on both sides of Pageland Lane in four geographic areas south of Sudley Road and approximately one mile north of Route 29, was expanded to include the entire corridor between Sudley Road and Route 29 that comprises 2,100 acres of rural land. The PWC Board of County Supervisors has conducted a number of public hearings on the proposal, most recently on November 1, at which time the Board voted to approve land use amendments that would pave the way for construction, despite much local opposition. Delegate Roem stated that she stood in opposition to the proposed data center project, citing the negative impact on property values and the environment both in terms of inadequate wildlife protection and lack of mitigation for storm water runoff. She cited concerns about construction of additional above ground transmission lines and impacts to the watershed.

While noting that it was not up to the state to interfere with local county decisions, Roem indicated that the proposed data center has federal and state implications due to the impacts on the Manassas Battlefield and Conway Robison State Forest, both of which border the proposed data center, and that she is considering introducing legislation in the Virginia General Assembly to address some of these concerns, opining that "there is no such thing as a green data center." While the Digital Gateway may be lucrative in the short-term, Roem stated that there was the potential for data centers to become obsolete rather quickly as technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace.

When Roem was provided a pamphlet outlining the State Legislative Plan, compiled by the Virginia Federation of

NARFE, she indicated that she would support all of the legislative goals contained therein. Roem stated that she would be running for the Virginia State Senate next year to represent Virginia's 30<sup>th</sup> State Senate District, citing recent state redistricting. Roem indicated that she could be reached via e-mail at [DelDRoem@house.virginia.gov](mailto:DelDRoem@house.virginia.gov) should members have constituent concerns about state legislation or other state related issues.

Following the presentation, a short business meeting was conducted, with officer and committee reports. The Minutes of the October 19 chapter meeting, as reported in the Newsletter, were approved. Absent the Treasurer's presentation of a report, Interim President Brandt indicated that over \$1,000 had been donated to Alzheimer's Research in the past year doubling the chapter goal of \$500 and based upon individual contributions from chapter members. The current chapter membership stands at 132, with two new members and five renewals in the past month. With Congress only having just returned to session, there was nothing new to report on national legislation. Alzheimer's Chair Markham indicated that the Washington Post had just recently reported a new drug for the treatment of Alzheimer's.

The next regular monthly meeting for Chapter 356 is scheduled for December 21. Executive Committee meetings are held via Zoom at 1:00 on the first Tuesday of each month. All members are welcome to attend the committee meetings and any member wishing to do so should contact one of the chapter officers to obtain the Zoom link.

Mary Brandt,  
Secretary



Guest speaker, Delegate Danica Roem, representing Virginia's 13<sup>th</sup> House District

**Alzheimer's Corner**  
*Marilyn Markman, RN*

When I read the headline on page one of the Washington Post of November 22, 2022, I said YES! FINALLY! The headline was "Simple blood tests could help detect Alzheimer's." A few years ago a chapter member called me asking about a blood test - at that time it was just being talked about.

In August 2016 an article told about the Alzheimer's Society funding a group of researchers from Cardiff University, Kings College London and Oxford University to study the blood from 292 individuals with early signs of memory impairment. They found a set of biomarkers (indication of disease) that predicted if an individual would develop Alzheimer's or not. A year later, these individuals were reassessed and about 1/4 had progressed to Alzheimer's.

In October 2021 an article appeared headlined "UK Rolls Out New 5 minute Alzheimer's Test". The article said the "current technology is expensive and time consuming, but a number of faster tests are in the pipeline"

Fast forward to the Washington Post "Simple blood tests could help detect Alzheimer's". The article states that simple blood tests for Alzheimer's long coveted by doctors and researchers have hit the market! The tests detect tiny amounts of abnormal proteins (one is amyloid beta) to determine if pathological hallmarks are present in the brain. These tests are being used mostly in clinical trials - doctors can prescribe tests but because of lack of effective treatment and cost (insurance coverage) this doesn't happen very often.

These blood tests open up a lot of questions - some doctors say they aren't ready for widespread use, some want more information. Some of the tests detect amyloid beta, others look for another protein – tau, and some are looking for other "markers". Amyloid plaques and tau tangles are the defining characteristics of Alzheimer's.

Cost is always a concern. There are three tests so far by different labs - Quest charges \$500, CN2 charges \$1,250 and Quanterix declined to provide a price but all 3 state some health plans and other programs pay for their tests.

Opinions on who should get these tests varies from only those who have cognitive problems to anyone who wants it.

Results could allow a person time to plan the future with life style changes or taking medication. Results could also cause depression. If diagnosed early and if the newest medication – lecanemab - is approved (FDA approval is slated for January 2023), the disease could be slowed down and as research continues a cure could be found.

Speaking of FDA approval - under current policy, agency approval is not required for laboratory-developed tests (like these blood tests). They are regulated under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments program under the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Some manufacturers are seeking FDA approval which would assure health care providers and insurers of the value of the tests.

Speaking of a cure and research, this is a great time to donate through NARFE to allow the research to find

**Chapter 356 Membership Report for November 2022**

2 new members  
 1 passed away

*Welcome to our Chapter*  
 Kim Cash  
 Carol Campbell

*Chapter 356 membership as of November 30 is 131 members.*

**CHAPTER 356 OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES**

<b>President (Interim)</b>	Mary Brandt	703-753-3954
<b>Vice President</b>	Priscilla Saboe	703-361-1150
<b>Secretary</b>	Mary Brandt	703-753-3954
<b>Treasurer</b>	Richard Horte	703-368-8767
<b>Membership Comm.</b>	Helen Brooks	703-791-6737
<b>National Legislation</b>	Vacant	
<b>Program Comm.</b>	Vacant	
<b>Public Relations Comm.</b>	Vacant	
<b>Service Officer</b>	Priscilla Saboe	703-361-1150
<b>Sunshine Comm.</b>	Priscilla Saboe	703-361-1150
<b>Alzheimer's Comm.</b>	Marilyn Markman, RN	703-791-4329
<b>Chapter Chaplain</b>	Vacant	
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Richard Horte	703-368-8767

**Email Address Changes**

Notify NARFE or our chapter whenever you change your email address to continue to receive this newsletter.

**Manassas Chapter Newsletter Online**

We are using the NARFE email system to distribute our newsletter to members. If you are not receiving NARFE email, please contact us or NARFE Headquarters at Member Services (703-838-7760). The latest newsletter is also available at the Virginia Federation website at [www.vanarfe.org](http://www.vanarfe.org). Go to AVP&Chapters. Scroll down to Current Chapter Newsletters, Area IX, Chapter 356.