



ANNANDALE CHAPTER NEWS

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association Chapter 1159 (Annandale)

P.O. Box 1463, Annandale, VA 22003

Serving Current, Former & Retired Federal Employees and Spouses
and Survivor Annuitants

Like us on Facebook at NARFE-Annandale 1159

Find us on the web at: www.narfe.org/chapter1159

We meet at the Mason District Governmental Center
6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale, Virginia

January 2023

Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 1, 2023 at 10:00 A.M.

Join us, either in-person or via Zoom, for our next meeting at 10:00 a.m., on Wednesday, February 1st, when George Kresslein will discuss preparing your 2022 taxes, with tips on recent changes in federal and state tax rules. For details, as well as information on registering for the Zoom meeting, see page 2.

PREZ SEZ – Winter is upon us, although the weather keeps trying to fool us. First, it's cold, then warm, then cold again. I love cold weather – if it's cold enough, it kills bad germs and gives me an excuse to stay home by the fireplace with cats for company. There are those, however, that don't enjoy what I see as a cozy day at home, and I realize it's tough on them. Growing up, amongst many places I lived, were two places with no snow. I must say I missed it a lot so perhaps that's why I enjoy it so much now.

I used to get in the elevator at work after a smattering of snow -- invariably someone would bemoan the "terrible" weather we were having. This memory made me think back to storms we've weathered here. I transferred to DC in 1977 and witnessed several big snowstorms. The *President's Day Snowstorm of 1979* recorded 18.7 inches of snow. It caught DC by surprise since forecasters predicted the storm would bypass the city. And it caused Smithsonian museums to close for two days in a row, something that hadn't happened in 50 years. Farmers in D.C. **(continued on page 2)**

(Prez Sez continued) to protest agricultural policy used their tractors to help plow streets and get critical personnel to hospitals. Then there was the *Megalopolitan Blizzard of February 1983* with 16.6 inches of snow, the *Blizzard of 1996* with 17.1 inches, *Snowpocalypse 2009*, 16.4 inches, and *Snowmageddon* of 2010 dropping 17.8 inches. While these storms are interesting history, for better or worse, we don't anticipate such snow levels again. But in addition to snow, we face other storms; we don't want people coming out in bad weather to attend our meetings, so please read our *Inclement Weather Policy* below. If in doubt, just stay home. We'll happily update you on any information you might miss. **Kim Rendelson, Chapter President**

A Few Details for Our February 1st Meeting – On Wednesday, February 1st, we will meet in the **Main Community Room** at the Governmental Center (straight back as you enter the Center's lobby). Our speaker will discuss preparing your 2022 tax return. To attend on Zoom, let **Doug Jones** know (doujones500@verizon.net or **703-425-3361**) no later than **Monday, January 30th**, so he can send you the meeting link and passcode.

January Program – Our January meeting began with **Jim Little, the Virginia Federation of NARFE Chapters' (VFN) Area IX Vice President**, swearing-in our



VFN VP Jim Little speaking to chapter

2023 Chapter Board members. Jim then provided a few comments on upcoming VFN events. Then, **Tara Aziz** and **Sandy Neuzil** (both from the Low Vision Center of the Prevention of Blindness Society of Metro Washington) collaborated on a presentation addressing “Low Vision Resources, Services, and Support”. There are numerous causes for low vision which can result in the need for assistance in magnification, color discernment, and light amplification/reduction. It's important to be aware of

clues that indicate a low vision exam is advisable. Some of **(continued on page 3)**

Inclement Weather Policy --When Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) are closed or virtual only because of inclement weather on the day of a scheduled chapter meeting, the chapter meeting for that month is canceled. If the FCPS open only 2 hours late on the day of a chapter meeting, the in-person and the Zoom meeting will be held.

(continued from page 2) these clues are: facial details of people in a room are blurred; print is harder to read; dropped items can't be found; or driving at dusk, night, or in certain daylight is difficult. If you decide to see a specialist in low vision, they recommend making an appointment at the Low Vision Resource Center in Bethesda (contact **301-951-4444**) or go to www.youreyes.org. Along with specialized testing, the Center offers a wide range of devices, *e.g.*, magnifiers and lighting, you can try out before buying, which avoids the on-line buying/trying/returning cycle. The speakers made additional recommendations. If reading becomes difficult, besides enlarging the page on your electronics, other remedies include downloading applications on your phone or computer that convert printed text to speech, or taking a picture of text to convert to speech. The centers can assist with downloading and training on these apps. If you become unable to drive, there are several resources to contact for assistance:



Our January speakers – Tara Azis at the podium and Sandy Neuzil on the screen via Zoom

NVRides, (<https://nvrides.org>); **GoGoGrandparent** assist (<https://gogograndparent.com/>) to call Uber, Lyft, or Taxi: **855-464-6872**; TOPS Program in Fairfax County: **703-222-9764**; and the WMATA: Senior Discount & Metro Access Paratransit: www.wmata.com/service/accessibility.

For overall assistance with training in how to navigate daily living skills, travel and white cane usage, contact the **Virginia Department of Blind and Vision**

Impaired <https://www.vdbvi.org/>. And for comprehensive information on eye health, programs, resources (including financial information and support groups), events, and monthly newsletters, see the *Low Vision Resource Guidebook by the Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington*, <https://www.youreyes.org/low-vision-resource-guide/>. Following their presentation,

Chapter Treasurer Jack Bagnulo presented and explained a proposed chapter budget for 2023, which was then approved. Snacks for the meeting were provided by: **Kim Rendelson, Loretta Nester, Fran Walinsky, Mary Ann Munley, Della Dahl and Sharon Sellers**. Leftover snacks were divided between Supervisor Gross' staff and the Mason District Police. **A total of 32 attended (19 in-person and 13 via Zoom).**

Fran Walinsky, Secretary

LEGISLATION REPORT – The new 118th Congress has been seated. The House had a rocky (and delayed) start with the unanticipated 15 rounds of voting to select the Speaker. Once selected, the Speaker made clear that the House majority will exercise the “power of the purse”, *i.e.*, slower spending levels if not a balanced federal budget. While good as a goal, federal retirees and federal employees should stay alert to NARFE’s calls to action as new legislation is introduced as proposals could include impact our earned benefits. First up for the new Congress is legislation on the Federal Government’s Debt Ceiling limit – a contentious issue with major impact. While it is inconceivable that the U.S. Government will be allowed to default on its obligations, it remains to be seen how well Congress can quickly obtain a bi-partisan resolution to avoid default.



From the 117th outgoing Congress:

Social Security Fairness Act, H.R. 82 -- Unfortunately, the legislation to repeal or reform the windfall elimination provision (WEP) and the government pension offset (GPO) – two provisions that reduce Social Security benefits for Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) annuitants due to their receipt of a CSRS pension – was not included in the year-end funding package. Despite widespread sponsorship on this bill, a vote on the bill was not scheduled. However, the bill could be re-introduced in the new Congress or the issue of repeal for WEP and GPO could be included in more encompassing legislation on Social Security Reform.

National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), H.R. 7900, was finally passed in early December 2022. The NDAA authorizes defense programs and includes additional policy riders. This year’s bill saw a number of noteworthy provisions added to the bill, along with several proposals left on the cutting room floor. Among the most prominent omissions was a bill that would block efforts to strip federal workers of their civil service protections, such as the Schedule F classification.

Consolidated Appropriations Act for FY2023 (i.e., Federal Budget 2023), H.R. 2617 -- After moderate last-minute drama, the 117th Congress passed an “omnibus” package of all 12 annual appropriations bills providing funding for federal agencies operations through the end of the 2023 fiscal year. The measure authorized \$1.627 trillion in spending for FY2023, according to the Congressional Budget Office. It also included \$47 billion in additional aid to Ukraine, \$27 billion in disaster aid and \$11 billion emergency supplemental spending. **(continued on page 5)**

(LEGISLATION REPORT continued)

Secure Act 2.0 retirement reform changes were included in the omnibus funding package: Secure 2.0 makes several changes to retirement financial regulations, including those for required minimum distributions (RMD) and catch-up contributions. Under Secure 2.0, the initial RMD age shifts from age 72 to 75 over a 10-year period. The legislation raises the current age 72 distribution requirement to 73 starting on January 1, 2023, and again to age 75 starting January 1, 2033. Catch-up contributions to 401(k)-style retirement accounts are also set to increase. Check with your financial advisor to see if any of the changes will affect your retirement accounts.

First Responder Fair RETIRE Act, H.R. 521 -- This law allows disabled federal first responders who sustained an injury or illness on the job to maintain their public safety retirement system benefits should they continue their service in a non-public safety position.

Virginia Legislation: Virginia's General Assembly commenced January 11th and will run through February 23rd. Watch for efforts to promote state tax reforms. One of our VFN State legislative priorities is to gain tax relief for CSRS retirees for the segment of their retirement which equates to Social Security which is not taxed in Virginia. However, no legislation on CSRS annuities has been introduced in the General Assembly thus far.



Virginia's State Sales Tax on groceries decreased effective January 1st, 2023 -- The 1.5% state portion of the grocery sales tax is now eliminated. However, note that the 1% local portion of the grocery sales tax remains in effect. This tax elimination will cost the state approximately \$7 million per year.

Virginia Minimum Wage Increase -- Per legislation passed in 2020, effective January 1st, 2023, the minimum wage increased to \$12 per hour. This increase will continue until the Virginia minimum wage reaches \$15 on January 1st, 2026. Beginning January 1st, 2027, and thereafter, Virginia's minimum wage will be adjusted annually to reflect increases in the consumer price index.

Virginia Consumer Data Protection Act (VCDPA) -- The VCDPA recently went into effect on January 1st, 2023. This legislation resulted from the 2021 General Assembly, making Virginia only the second state after California to enact comprehensive consumer privacy legislation.

NARFE-PAC -- Believe it or not, now is the time to start thinking about your NARFE PAC contributions. With the outcome of the recent Congressional elections, NARFE needs to educate new members of Congress and new members to Congressional Committees about the Federal workforce issues, including the pay and benefits earned by employees and retirees. NARFE PAC funds are used to gain access to Congressional members to help them understand our NARFE issues and the impact of pending legislation on our earned pay and benefits. It is very important for NARFE to develop the relationships with those elected, and help support those who support us. NARFE PAC is a traditional PAC registered with the Federal Election Commission: funds can only come from NARFE members who give voluntary contributions (your dues cannot be used to this purpose); funds are given directly to candidates of Congress and political committees; and, your contributions are not tax deductible.

NARFE makes it very easy to contribute online through its website, or via mail using the PAC Contribution form included in every *NARFE Magazine* (see page 13 of your January/February 2023 *NARFE Magazine*). Please consider a donation – or even a sustaining donation to the NARFE PAC – as a way to support those who support us in keeping our annuities and benefits intact. Every contribution, large or small, is helpful to NARFE PAC activities. **Mary Ann Munley, Legislation Chair**

Alzheimer's Report – The FDA just granted an accelerated approval of a new Alzheimer's drug: Lecanemub. It was developed by the English firm, Biogen and the Japanese firm, Eisai. It will be sold under the brand name Leqembi (luh-kem-bee). It was designed to help those with mild cognitive impairment. The accelerated approval means that further testing will be conducted before final approval. The drug will cost \$26,500 per year and will be administered through an IV every two weeks.

Our goal in 2022 for donations to the Alzheimer's Research Fund was \$4,000; total donations for 2022 was \$6,018. Thank you for your very generous response. The Chapter Board approved a goal of \$4,000 for 2023. If you would like to help find a cure for Alzheimer's, you can send a donation by mail to: **Treasurer, NARFE Chapter 1159, P.O. Box 1463, Annandale, VA, 22003**. Please make checks payable to *NARFE Alzheimer's Research Fund* and include *Chapter 1159* on the memo line.

Phil Gilliland, Alzheimer's Chair

Get to Know Your Board -- In NARFE, we have all worked for different agencies and held a variety of positions. However, in monthly meetings, we don't often have time to learn about each other's backgrounds. This month we return with the fifth in our series spotlighting our Chapter 1159 Board Members. In this issue, we will introduce **Fran Walinsky**, our newly elected chapter Secretary:

I was born in Norfolk, and lived there until we moved to Memphis, when I was five, so my dad could take a position with the US Postal Service Southern Regional HQ. There we stayed throughout my formative years, though I visited my grandparents back in Virginia Beach every summer. Those visits influenced me to return to Virginia for college, where I attended William and Mary (B.A. in English), and worked at the Norfolk Naval Base in the summers. After getting my Masters of Art in Teaching from Vanderbilt, I taught in high school while my husband finished law school at Vanderbilt. We returned to Virginia, and I decided to have a career in the government instead of teaching. After a brief time at the Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, I got a position at Defense Logistics Agency, and spent the rest of my career there, in various analytical positions. I retired as Chief of the Order Management Division for the agency in 2013. In retirement, I've provided elder care for family members; volunteered in various ways (including singing in the choir at church); and, most recently, delighted in occasional babysitting for my two granddaughters.

COMMUNITY CORNER

2023 NARFE-FEEA Scholarship Program -- The 2023 NARFE-FEEA Scholarship Awards Program is now accepting applications. Recipients will receive a one-time award of \$1,000 to put toward the 2023-24 school year. Applicants must be seniors in high school; children, grandchildren or great-grandchildren of NARFE members are eligible. The deadline to apply is 3 p.m. ET Thursday, March 16, 2023. For more information and to access the application, visit www.feea.org/our-programs/scholarships/.



Stuff the Bus -- *Stuff the Bus* began in 2011 in response to a need to help restock the shelves of local food pantries after the holidays. This collaborative program is a partnership between Fairfax County and local nonprofits. Now in its 12th year, *Stuff the Bus* continues to support food assistance efforts for families and households. For locations and dates, go to



<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/neighborhood-community-services/stuff-the-bus>.

Nearby *Stuff the Bus* locations and dates are:

Saturday, January 21

Falls Church Giant (10 a.m. – 3 p.m.)

7235 Arlington Blvd., Falls Church, VA 22042

Benefitting *Falls Church Community Service Council* (FCCSC)

Saturday, February 11

Annandale Giant (9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.)

7137 Columbia Pike Annandale, VA 22003

Benefitting *Annandale Christian Community for Action* (ACCA)

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