

March 2023



# MANASSAS CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

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

Email: narfe356@hotmail.com

## Next Meeting Date

**March 15**

*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.

## 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**

## Local Civil War Historical Sites, Kevin Pawlak, Historic Site

*Manager, Prince William County Office of Historic Preservation*

Prince William County saw the armies of both sides occupy it for significant amounts of time during the American Civil War. Major battles were fought in the county and hardly any building, home, town, or farm were untouched by the war. Ben Lomond, the home of the Pringle family, was used as a hospital and headquarters and later covered with graffiti. Bristoe Station was an important stop on the Orange & Alexandria Railroad and thus saw its share of war, essentially wrecking the community after four years of encampments and battles there. This talk will share some of the stories of the Civil War at these two sites through the eyes of the people who made history there.

Kevin Pawlak manages Ben Lomond Historic Site and Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park. Kevin also works as a battlefield guide at Antietam National Battlefield and Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. He is the author of six books on the American Civil War.

are seeking one of the rooms in the NRF room block) or reserve on-line at [www.hilton.com](http://www.hilton.com) (enter Hampton, VA and the dates April 2-5 and click on special rates). NARFE President William "Bill" Shackelford will address the conference and a member of Congress is also expected to participate. The conference offers an opportunity to meet chapter members from other parts of the state, attend training sessions and hear interesting speakers on a variety of topics; the VFN will also be holding election of officers. To register and find additional details go to <https://vanarfe.org/conference2023/>

March is also NARFE/PAC month. The PAC is NARFE's political action committee and affords members an opportunity to help in the fight to protect our earned pay and benefits and to fight back against threats to cut our annuities, cost-of-living adjustments and healthcare coverage by fostering relationships with Congressional members and garnering opportunities to make them better informed about the issues affecting federal retirees. NARFE has a 2023-2024 election cycle goal to raise \$1.6 million and to disburse \$1.2 million in political contributions. Every member of NARFE is being urged to consider giving to the PAC during NARFE/PAC month. Contributions may be made on-line ([www.narfe.org](http://www.narfe.org)) or by mailing the form found in the NARFE Magazine.

Mary M. Brandt,  
Interim President

## From The Chapter President

Looking forward to March, chapter members are invited and encouraged to attend the annual Conference of the Virginia Federation of NARFE (VFN), which includes all of the Virginia chapters. This year the conference will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel and Convention Center in Hampton, VA from April 2-5. The registration fee for the conference and banquet (the evening of April 3) is \$70 through March 1, \$75 through March 15 and \$85 thereafter. Registration for the conference only is \$40 through March 15 and \$50 thereafter. The deadline to book discounted hotel rooms is March 3. You may phone the hotel to book a room (be sure to mention that you are attending the conference and

## Legislation Update and News of Note

### Equal COLA Act Reintroduced in the House

Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA) on February 8 reintroduced the Equal COLA Act (HR 866), which would ensure that federal retirees in the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) and the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) both receive the same annual percentage cost of living increase (COLA) each year. Under current legislation, FERS retirees receive a reduced COLA as much as one percentage point below that for CSRS retirees. The legislation would continue to tie both retirement systems' cost of living adjustments to the consumer price index for workers (CPI-W). NARFE has long advocated not only for Congress to standardize COLAs for FERS and CSRS employees, but also for lawmakers to shift the underlying statistics used to calculate the raises—and Social Security adjustments—from the CPI-W to the consumer price index for the elderly, which they argue better reflects retirees' living costs. National President William Shackelford endorsed Connolly's legislation stating that "The Equal COLA Act would ensure federal retirees maintain the value of their retirement annuities, earned through careers in public service, by providing full COLAs to FERS retirees. Unfortunately, when inflation is high, as it has been recently, FERS retirees only receive a diet COLA, reduced by as much as 1 percentage point. This may not seem like a lot at first glance, but when the reduction compounds year after year, it may cost an average FERS retiree tens of thousands of dollars over the course of their retirement—and even more for some."

Source: Government Executive, February 8, 2023

### Calculating COLAs Based on the CPI-E

On February 1, Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA) reintroduced the Fair COLA for Seniors Act. The bill would provide more accurate cost of living adjustments (COLAs) for federal retirees by calculating COLAs using the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E), which better tracks the spending habits of seniors than the current methodology. Under the current COLA calculation method, which is based on the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W), retirees lose purchasing power due to underestimated inflation. The CPI-W tracks the spending habits of the urban workforce, thus inadequately assessing the differences in costs for the goods and services seniors frequently purchase. The CPI-E, on the other hand, only tracks the spending habits of Americans age 62 and older thus better representing federal retirees and the costs as-

sociated with living on a fixed income. NARFE President William Shackelford endorsed the legislation stating that "the premise of the Fair COLA for Seniors Act is simple: Retirees should receive annual cost-of-living adjustments that accurately account for their spending habits."

Source: NARFE NewsLine, February 8, 2023

### 12-Weeks Paid Family Leave

On February 8, Sen. Brian Schatz (D-HI) and Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA) introduced the Comprehensive Paid Family Leave Act, H.R. 856/S. 274, which would expand paid leave options for the federal workforce, including U.S. Postal Service employees, by broadening the list of conditions where federal employees are eligible for 12 weeks per year of paid leave to care for an ailing family member or in connection with a family member going on or returning from active duty. Joining the Democrats in support of the measure was Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA). Federal employees, like those in the private sector, currently are able to take up to 12 weeks of paid leave in connection with the birth, adoption or foster care of a child. However, they are currently only eligible for unpaid leave for the other events covered by the Family Medical Leave Act. The proposed legislation would expand eligibility for federal workers for paid leave for all the remaining conditions covered by the Family Medical Leave Act.

Source: Government Executive, February 8 2023; NARFE NewsLine, February 14, 2023

### Efforts to Block Reintroduction of Schedule F

On February 14, Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA) and 14 other Senate Democrats introduced the Saving the Civil Service Act (S. 399). On the House side, companion legislation (H.R. 1002) has been introduced by Reps. Gerry Connolly (D-VA), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Abigail Spanberger (D-VA). The legislation would block any position in the federal competitive service created after September 30, 2020 from being reclassified outside of merit system principles by the President without the express consent of Congress. Unlike previous iterations of the bill, it also creates a series of new restrictions on how jobs may be reclassified within the confines of the current system. Occupied positions—jobs currently held by a federal employee—could not be reclassified from the competitive service, or from other schedules in the excepted service, into Schedule C without prior approval of the director of the Office of Personnel Management. Additionally, federal agencies would be limited to reclassifying 1% of their workforces or five employees, whichever is more, from the competitive service or across excepted service job schedules over the course of a four-year presidential term. And agencies would need to obtain the consent of federal employees occupying a posi-

(Continued on page 3)

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tion before they could reclassify it to another job schedule. OPM would be required to present an annual report containing all positions that were transferred to the excepted service, including justification. Conservative activists are prepared to bring back the initiative begun under the Trump Administration to create a new Schedule F, which would have in effect converted a large portion of the Civil Service into at-will employees, immediately upon the election of a Republican president, and they have identified 50,000 federal workers to target upon its implementation and threaten with firing. The House on two occasions passed legislation blocking those plans, and although Senator Kaine led efforts in the Senate to include that bill in either the omnibus spending package or the annual defense policy bill, he could not secure a floor vote for the measure. In a statement, NARFE's National President William Shackelford said "The Saving the Civil Service Act provides a bipartisan, congressional check on misuse of executive powers by limiting the ability of any president to bypass the merit-based civil service framework through broad new exceptions to long-standing rules. The merit-based civil service system provides continuity through changing administrations, preserves institutional knowledge and expertise within the federal government, and protects the rule of law. It ensures federal employees are hired and fired based on their ability to perform the job – or not – and not based on political connections. NARFE is grateful that Congressman Connolly and Senator Kaine are leading the way on this effort to preserve a critical institutional safeguard for democracy."

Source: Government Executive, February 14, 2023, NARFE NewsLine, February 22, 2023

### **Efforts to Block Relocating Federal Offices**

In late February, Rep. Jennifer Wexton (D-VA) and Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) introduced the Conducting Oversight to Secure Transparency (COST) of Relocations Act ([H.R. 1106](#)), which is aimed at ensuring that future agency relocation proposals are sufficiently vetted before they are implemented. The legislation would require federal agencies to conduct a cost-benefit analysis in accordance with federal best practices ahead of any relocation effort. That analysis would then be submitted to the agency's inspector general and to Congress for review and eventual publication. The report would require an analysis of both quantitative data like real estate and staffing costs, as well as what the lawmakers described as qualitative metrics such as employee attrition and any potential

impacts to the agency's mission or delivery of services. The legislation is in response to efforts made during the previous administration to move federal offices outside of the Washington metropolitan area, including the relocation of the Agriculture Department's Economic Research Service and National Institute of Food and Agriculture from Washington, D.C., to Kansas City, Mo. Moving these agencies was found by a recent Government Accountability Office report to have resulted in a loss of institutional knowledge and a precipitous fall in diversity metrics. Following the move, both agencies lost more than half of their staff, which led to a significant loss of productivity.

Source: Government Executive, February 22, 2023

### **Nursing Home Standards of Care and Staffing Requirements in Virginia**

The General Assembly of the State of Virginia passed legislation setting staffing requirements for certified nursing homes and imposing sanctions on facilities that are not compliant. The House approved the bill, sponsored by Del. Bobby Orrock (R-Spotsylvania), by a vote of 95-2 and on February 15, it was passed unanimously in the state Senate. The bill requires facilities to provide an average of just over three hours of nursing care to each resident each day. The staffers could be certified nursing assistants, licensed practical nurses or registered nurses. Homes that are non-compliant would be required to submit a corrective action plan. A home that is out of compliance two years in a row could face a \$50,000 fine; facilities out of compliance for three years could be placed on probation. The State Health Commissioner could choose not to impose sanctions if he or she determines that the facility made an effort to recruit and retain staffers, but was unable to do so. The legislation was endorsed by the Virginia Federation of NARFE (VFN) and incorporated as a component of the VFN's 2023 State Legislative Plan. The legislation now goes to Gov. Glenn Youngkin for his consideration. If signed into law, it would take effect in July of 2025.

Source: Richmond Times Dispatch, February 15, 2023; VFN 2023 State Legislative Plan

## NARFE WEBINARS

### Upcoming NARFE Webinars:

#### **How to Prepare for Long-Term Care: Aging Gracefully While Financially Secure**

Tuesday, March 14 | 2 p.m. ET

Long-term care can include not only financial burdens, but emotional costs: to an adult who no longer can do the normal daily activities without help, and to a spouse, parent or other loved one who must bear the physical burden of becoming a caregiver, which can involve lifting, bathing a helping a family member with dressing or other personal care needs. In this webinar, NARFE federal benefits experts Tammy Flanagan and Mark Keen, CFP, will guide you through how to plan and prepare – emotionally and financially – for the prospect of future long-term care costs.

In this webinar you will learn:

- The importance of planning for the possibility of physical and mental issues that may result in the need for long-term care.
- Your options for long-term care.
- The cost of long-term care and your options for paying.
- Comparing long-term care insurance options: traditional vs. hybrid long-term care insurance.
- How to navigate coverage decisions within the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program.

Planning and preparing for long-term care can be difficult and confusing. Let NARFE show you the way with this valuable learning experience.

**[REGISTER NOW](#)**

### Recent NARFE Webinars:

#### **NARFE Advocacy in the 118th Congress**

Wednesday, February 15

Following the 2022 congressional midterm elections, a new Congress – the 118th – took office this year. Republicans took control of the House of Representatives, while Democrats retained control of the Senate. With divided government, fights over raising the debt limit and funding the government loom. What will this mean for federal employees and retirees? What are NARFE's advocacy priorities for the new Congress, and how will the new dynamic affect them? What can you do to join the fight? Learn what's in store for NARFE advocacy in the 118th Congress.

[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, February 15th

Chapter 356 held its regular monthly meeting, with 12 members and guests present. Guest speaker, Don Wilson, Virginia Librarian, Ruth E. Lloyd Information Center, Prince William Public Libraries, relayed some interesting facts about Prince William County history.

Mr. Wilson, who has led the local history and genealogy department of Prince William Libraries since 1979, presented several historical details about Prince William County and its early residents. The area that now comprises Prince William County was created in 1731 and included all territory between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers. Prince William County encompassed all of what later became Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier and Loudoun Counties and the independent cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park. Fairfax County was split from Prince William County in 1742, and first Loudoun (in 1757) and then the incorporated town of Alexandria (in 1779, part of which later became Arlington County) would later be split from Fairfax County. Fauquier County was created from western Prince William County in 1759. Prince William County was named for the third son of King George II of England and the nephew of George III. The area was explored by Captain John Smith of Williamsburg fame. Many of the area's rivers and streams have Indian names. Manassas was not recognized as a place until the 1850s when after the construction of a railroad that ran from Alexandria to Warrenton, a second rail line was built off of it from Manassas Junction to Manassas Gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains. In its 300-year history, Prince William County has had five county seats. The first Court House was near Occoquan in Woodbridge; it then moved five miles south of Brentsville, then met near Dumfries and then in Brentsville until Manassas became the county seat in 1893. The original seal of Prince William County, which is still used today, shows a human hand holding scales over a stock of tobacco. Wilson proceeded to give several vignettes about some of the early residents of Prince William County, including one of the first African American residents,

who came to Prince William County as an indentured servant and went to court to gain his status as a free man after the expiration of his contract; an early explorer of the "new land", who reportedly saved Daniel Boone's life; and the father and grandfather of Robert E. Lee.

Before the presentation, a short business meeting was conducted, with officer and committee reports. The Minutes of the January 18 chapter meeting, as reported in the Newsletter, were approved, and the Treasurer's Report was adopted. The current chapter membership stands at 129. Interim President Brandt referred members to the Chapter Newsletter for national legislation updates and noted several additional bills impacting the federal workforce or retirees had been introduced in Congress since our February Newsletter was issued, including the Equal COLA Act, the Comprehensive Paid Family Leave Act and the Fair COLA for Seniors Act. (See p. 2 for additional information). The raffle for the Alzheimer's Fund collected \$29, with the winner donating her share.

The next regular monthly meeting for Chapter 356 is scheduled for March 15 at the Hibachi Buffet. The next Executive Committee meeting will be held via Zoom at 1:00 on March 7, the first Tuesday of the month; all members are welcome to attend the committee meeting and any member wishing to do so should contact one of the chapter officers to obtain the Zoom link.

Mary M. Brandt,  
Secretary

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

If you aren't getting as many emails as your friends and neighbors, let me make a suggestion - Google "clinical trials". Since I did that I receive 2-3 a week about volunteering for different trials.

Speaking of clinical trials, I went to my friend Google and this is one thing I found - "16 Reasons Why People Join Clinical Trials" written by Felicia Fuller (Imperial Clinical Research Service) December 2015. These 16 can be broken down into 3 categories - helping others, helping yourself and financial help.

Helping others and helping yourself can almost be combined. The reasons are

- \* helping find a cure for what ails you and others
- \* getting access to the best treatment
- \* finding a better medication or treatment to prevent further suffering
- \* may help to live longer- especially those who are terminally ill, this could be the last option after exhausting all other options
- \* give you further knowledge of disease or condition
- \* help predict future diseases
- \* to be more active in your care.

But, the biggest reason people volunteer is hope - hope for a chance that a new medication or treatment will be better than the current one and may help lead to a cure.

Financially, trials can be a help to a person in a few ways - through an eligibility exam one may find out about other conditions. Low cost or free meds-so a person with the condition won't have to pay high costs of current drugs. Some trials pay participants, which can be a "sticky" subject for those running the trials.

If you or someone you know is thinking about becoming a "research subject" there is a wealth of information to guide you through the process.

So, what is new in the Alzheimer's World, aside from a lot of clinical trials going on? Donanemab's (an antibody designed to remove amyloid plaques in the brain) application for accelerated approval has been denied by the FDA. Reason - Eli Lilly failed to meet the promise of at least 100 patients receiving Donanemab for a year. They will reapply. Meanwhile an anti-amyloid vaccine is in Phase-1b/2 trial. So, watch out for this study called ABATE(NCT05462106). Let us keep the Bruce Willis family along with all dementia patients and families in our thoughts!

As we continue to watch these new and exciting developments please continue to support research through NARFE

**Chapter 356 Membership Report for February 2023**

2 dropped for nonrenewal  
 1 passed away

*In Memoriam*  
 We deeply regret the passing of the following Chapter member

John Moreschi

*Chapter 356 membership as of February 25 is 128 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/newsletters/](http://www.vanarfe.org/newsletters/). Scroll down to Current Chapter Newsletters, Area IX, Chapter 356.