

NARFE Chapter 1116 Newsletter

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

APRIL 2023

Next Chapter Meeting
Tuesday, April 11, 2023
1:00 PM
Vienna Community Center

Next Board Meeting
Thursday, April 27, 2023
1:00 PM
Vienna Community Center

2023 Board Chapter Officers

President
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mkarpa@hotmail.com

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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
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Daad Pierce 571-274-9334

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Newsletter Team
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Harriet Epstein 703-560-4137

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – KATHY ARPA

The 2023 VFN Conference is history. Eighty-five NARFE members and guests attended the Conference held in Hampton, Virginia on April 2-5. Larry McIlwee was elected 1st Vice President and Pat Wolfe was elected 2nd Vice President. There are two candidates for the positions of president and secretary of the VFN, which will result in a ballot being sent to all Virginia Federation NARFE Members. There is still no candidate for Treasurer. If you are interested in this position, let me know and I will pass your name on to the Nominating Committee Chair. Mark and I will give you a short report on the conference at the April 11th Chapter Meeting. There will be more details and pictures in our May newsletter.

We had a very lively Chapter Meeting in March. Linda Colbert, Mayor of Vienna, brought us up to date on the new developments in Vienna and shared information about new restaurants which will be opening in the next few months. See detailed Secretary's report on pages 2 and 3. During our break we celebrated a special birthday for our First Vice President Ralph Dantine who celebrated his actual 80th birthday with his family on March 11 and Jim Hathaway. Members celebrated St. Patrick's Day with the wearing of green, and special holiday decorations.



During the meeting, I presented Anne Shea (pictured here) with a Distinguished Membership Certificate celebrating her 15 years as a member of our Chapter.

Kathy

TREASURER'S REPORT – DAVE GRAF

Since the March Newsletter, the Chapter received \$107.96 for membership dues collected by NARFE's National Headquarters for February. Also, \$4.00 was contributed to the Coffee Fund at the March 14th Membership Meeting. There have not been any expenses.

The 50/50 drawing for Alzheimer's Research raised \$34.00 at the March 14th Membership Meeting. These donations have been sent to the Virginia Federation of NARFE (VFN) Coordinator for the NARFE Alzheimer's Research Fund. The total contribution for calendar year 2023 is \$122.00.

COMING UP

April 11 - Chapter Meeting – Vienna Community Center – 1:00 p.m. – Program – Report on VFN Conference

April 18 – Deadline for Federal Income Tax Filing

May 9 – Chapter Meeting – Vienna Community Center – 1:00 p.m. – Guest Speaker – Peggy James, Director, Vienna Business Association and annual ice cream social

June 13 – Chapter picnic – time and location TBD

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SECRETARY'S REPORT – CHRIS GIESELER

Chapter 1116 President Kathy Arpa called the March 14th Membership Meeting to order at 1:09 p.m. at the Vienna Community Center (VCC). She then asked the guest speaker, Ms. Linda Colbert, Mayor of Vienna, to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance, whereupon the assemblage rose and recited the Pledge. Kathy acknowledged attendees having birthdays in March: Ralph Dantine (No. 80!) and Jim Hathaway. The assemblage sang “Happy Birthday” to the honorees.

PROGRAM: Kathy asked 1st Vice President and Program Chair Ralph Dantine to introduce our speaker. Ralph made some prefatory comments, including Ms. Colbert was born in Vienna and attended Madison High School; She holds Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in Math; she was elected to the Vienna Town Council in 2014 and was elected Mayor of the Town in 2020. Her mother, Jane Seeman, was also Mayor of Vienna.

The Mayor then updated us on quite a few things going on in Vienna:

- In light of a change in the Commonwealth’s laws, municipalities must now hold their elections when the general elections take place. All seven Town officials (Mayor and six council members) will be up for election or re-election at the November 7, 2023, general election. The officials will each serve 2-year terms.
- The Mayor’s Volunteers Reception is to be held on April 18 at the Vienna Fire Hall. The Mayor’s Fitness Challenge (Vienna vs. the Cities of Falls Church and Fairfax) starts Saturday March 18 through May 13. The Mayor’s Coffees are held every month at various locations in Town.
- There’s also the Green Expo; Taste of Vienna on April 29; Viva Vienna on Memorial Day weekend (including the Beer Fest which will be near the other activities along Church Street); the Liberty Amendments months starting in June; and an archeological dig near the Freeman House.
- The Mayor discussed the status of various business projects in Vienna. The lot at the corner of Maple & Nutley is still vacant; the owners have not officially filed a business application but are interested in doing so. Sunrise Assisted Living is expected to be completed in April. There is an issue with their sidewalks being too narrow. Regarding Vienna Marketplace (where Marco Polo used to be) the ground floor businesses have not opened yet because the builder did not build them according to the plan approved by the Town. Compass Real Estate will move into most of the retail space. Vienna Court (across from the Vienna Presbyterian Church) will become duplex-housing. New cottage-style homes will open up at Cottage Court (located behind the Jiffy Lube). The former Amphora will open with fare at “middlin” prices. The new restaurant will maintain the external structure of the building but will be renovated inside. Brusters Ice Cream has opened on Glyndon Street near Café Renaissance. Also, a grand opening was held recently by the new owner of the Virginian restaurant.



- In a question-and-answer discussion, the Mayor explained that the Town was updating and reorganizing its zoning code to make it easier to understand. Among the changes: height restrictions for at least some businesses were increased; outdoor dining facilities may need to be reduced; and residences can build front porches out a bit closer to the street.
- Regarding [recurring] rumors that the Giant property in Vienna would be sold, the Mayor responded that those rumors started when a site drawing had been released. No proposal has yet been submitted to the Town of Vienna. The Mayor wants new businesses to open in town that are “exciting”.
- Efforts are underway to improve the landscaping of the town (e.g., flowers and irrigation on Maple Avenue and Church Street); provide more sidewalks; and update the “winter” street-pole decorations on Maple Avenue by changing from the aging wreaths to the new snowflakes. Under the auspices of the Vienna Art Commission, a mural will be built in town whereby residents can donate \$5 per brick for the mural. Also, traffic lights on Maple are being updated to have real-time timing for the lights.
- The Town Council is considering measures to increase lower-cost housing, but those measures could result in higher density housing. Also, public hearings are anticipated for considering the “look” of residences in Town. And, there may be a tax rate decrease for the Town.

Dave Graf complimented the Mayor on the depiction of Vienna on a recent episode of the PBS series “If You Lived Here”. The series was shown every Monday night on WETA.



Following the Mayor’s remarks, Chapter Photographer Mark Arpa snapped a picture of the Mayor and all attendees wearing green.

<<< Margaret Murphy

Margaret Murphy, Mary Margaret McGowan, Jayne Seidman, Mayor Colbert, Chris Gieseler, Ralph Dantine, Dave Graf and Bill Inch >>>



We then took a break and enjoyed birthday cake for Ralph and some Irish/St Patrick’s Day-themed goodies.



Thereafter, the business portion of the meeting commenced, and reports by Secretary and State Legislation Chair Chris Gieseler (regarding both State and National legislation), Treasurer Dave Graf, and Membership Chair Jayne Seidman. Updated versions of those reports appear elsewhere in this newsletter.

Ralph Dantine and Jim Hathaway >>



Ralph announced the following events:

April 2-5—VFN Annual Meeting/Conference—Embassy Suites, Hampton, Virginia.

May 9—Chapter meeting—VCC—1pm—Ice Cream Social and Peggy James, Vienna Business Association

As Old Business, Kathy reported that 15 Chapter members were financial “Supporters” of the conference. The Supporters donated a total of \$375 for the Conference, an exceptionally good figure. [No New Business was discussed.]

50/50 DRAWINGS: \$68 was collected at the meeting for the 50/50 drawings. With 50 percent (\$34) going to NARFE Alzheimer’s Research and the remaining \$34 being split between two lucky winners. Other drawings were held for the four shamrock plants donated by Ralph.

The meeting adjourned at 2:47 p.m. upon a motion made by Mary Margaret McGowan and seconded by Shirley Martin and agreed to by acclamation of the assemblage.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT – JAYNE SEIDMAN

Total Current Chapter Members – 175; Total National Members in Chapter Area - 140; for a Grand Total of 315 members in our area. We welcome two new members, Carl Kirchner and Judy Hathaway. Judy attended the March Chapter Meeting as a guest with her husband, Jim and joined NARFE the next day.

SERVICE OFFICER REPORT – SUSAN LARSON

As Service Officer for NARFE Chapter 1116, it is my responsibility to keep you up to date with information pertaining to your federal benefits and retirement. Each month I attend zoom meetings with VFN Service Officer Arlene Arthur and other service officers throughout Virginia where we discuss various retirement and benefit topics. At our last meeting, we discussed *my Social Security* online accounts.

my Social Security is an online service provided by the Social Security Administration that allows you to review your earnings history, check current or future benefits, and access many other Social Security services. Go to ssa.gov to log in or create your account. SSA is using [Login.gov](https://login.gov) to allow you to sign in to your personal account safely and securely. If you created your account prior to September 2021 you can log in using your username and password.

I suggest that you access the ssa.gov website and your *my Social Security* account to review the wealth of information that SSA provides. Wondering about that one-time lump sum death benefit, it is there. Cannot find your SSA-1099, it is there. Need verification of your future Medicare Part B premium, yes that is there also. Need to replace a lost, stolen or damaged Social Security card? Yes, that is there also.

As you navigate the main page you will find a video at the bottom titled “What is *my Social Security*”. View that for a short tutorial. At the top of the page is a question- “What should I do if I get a call claiming there’s a problem with my Social Security number or account?” If you click on that line you will find a link that will allow for reporting a Social Security-related scam online. Please note that the next line on that page starting with the American flag and “An official website of the United States government [Here's how you know](#)”. When you see this on a government website, you can feel comfortable using it and enter your personal information. As we all know, you cannot be too careful when using the internet and providing personal information.



I hope you find this information helpful and useful.

LEGISLATION REPORTS

National Legislation – Daad Pierce

- On March 1st, Senators Sherrod Brown and Susan Collins reintroduced the Senate version of the Social Security Fairness Act (S.597). It would fully repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) laws that adversely affect many CSRS retirees. The House’s version of the bill (H.R.82) was reintroduced earlier in the year. NARFE continues to encourage its members to ask their lawmakers in both chambers of Congress to cosponsor the bills.
- On March 9th, OPM’s Director Kiran Ahuja testified at a hearing of the House’s Committee on Oversight and Accountability. Before the hearing, NARFE submitted a statement for the record outlining its concerns with OPM and federal benefit programs, along with the association’s support of a merit-based civil service.
- By March 21st, the House’s Social Security Fairness Act (H.R.82) has already garnered 200 cosponsors, just 18 shy of a majority, and 90 shy of the 290 cosponsors needed to trigger the House Consensus Calendar rule process that would require either committee advancement or a floor vote.
- On March 28th, Speaker Kevin McCarthy asked President Biden to set a date by the end of the week for their next negotiation meeting on the debt limit. NARFE continues to monitor the debt ceiling debate and push back on proposals that would harm the retirement security of federal employees and retirees.

Other News:

The White House’s 2024 budget (published the second week of March) includes the following NARFE-supported items:

- Proposes a 5.2 percent average pay raise for federal employees, in line with the requested military pay raise and recent changes in private-sector wages.
- Requests \$6.6 million for OPM to help reduce retirement processing times and improve retirement customer satisfaction, expand a pilot for online retirement applications, and begin to fund additional IT modernization initiatives.
- Advocates legislation to prevent a return of Schedule F. This was a broad new exception to merit-based civil service rules that was pursued by the previous administration.

Virginia State Legislation – Chris Gieseler

The Governor of Virginia has signed 739 of the 820 bills presented to him, including the Nursing Home Staffing Standards Bill (HB 1446), which the Virginia Federation of NARFE supported as part of its 2023 State Legislative Plan. The bills that were signed have become law, and most of them will go into effect on July 1 of this year. One of the exceptions is HB 1446, which has a delayed effective date of July 1, 2025.

He vetoed three bills, none of which seem of interest to NARFE. The Governor returned to the General Assembly 78 bills for which he recommended amendments, including HB 1400, the Budget Bill (where he could make line-item vetoes), for which he submitted four recommendations. These recommended amendments make “technical adjustments” for certain budgeted programs. The Governor did not call for a Special Session of the General Assembly but did urge the legislature to consider his amendments. He repeated a previous intention to work with the General Assembly to pass \$1 billion in tax relief to Virginia taxpayers as well as to deliver over \$2.6 billion towards “job growth, public safety, education excellence and behavioral health services.”

The amended and vetoed bills, together with the Governors objections and/or recommended amendments, will go back to the General Assembly for consideration during the so-called Reconvened Session, which starts on Wednesday, April 12, 2023.

To override the veto of a particular bill, the House of Delegates and the Virginia Senate would each need a two-thirds majority vote to do so. If both houses successfully override the veto, the version of the bill sent to the governor becomes law. Otherwise, the bill does not become law.

For bills with recommended amendments, the process is more complicated. Regardless of what the legislature does in terms of adopting or rejecting the Governor's amendments, once both houses agree (assuming they do agree) to a bill during the Reconvened Session, they will send the bill back to the Governor. He can then sign, veto, or let the bill become law without his signature. He has 30 days from the date the Reconvened Session adjourns to act on the bill.

SUNSHINE REPORT – HARRIET EPSTEIN



Sympathy is extended to Larry McIlwee, VFN Chaplain, whose wife, Chris, passed away suddenly on March 4.

We celebrated birthdays for Ralph Dantine and Jim Hathaway at our March Chapter Meeting.

We recently learned that Leon Evans, our facilities contact at the Vienna Community Center for many, many years, has retired. Although we were not able to say good-bye to him, the Board signed a Retirement Card wishing him the best.

If you know of someone who needs a little sunshine, please call me on 703-560-4137.



VACANCY ON BOARD – We are still looking for an editor of the newsletter, which is published 10 times a year. If you are interested, please contact Kathy Arpa or Dave Graf.

