



Summer Edition June 2023

Williamsburg Chapter 685 Elected Officers for 2023



Hazel Braxton, President

rbraxton7@cox.net

Penny Kell, Secretary

pzkell@cox.net

Larry Leiby, Treasurer

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Mary Grace Dorsey, 1st Vice President

dorseyspencer008@gmail.com

Will McElfresh, 2nd Vice President

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See chapter website for appointed program chairs and officers

President's Message by *Hazel Braxton, Chapter President*

As Chapter 685 approaches the end of the 2022-23 program year, we encourage our members to review and take full advantage of what NARFE offers during our two months summer break/vacation. During the break if you just consider the "Benefits Resources" offered by NARFE, there is information on retirement, financial planning, estate planning, survivor benefits, divorce and other topics.

Although Chapter 685 will not have a program meeting in June or July, we will celebrate our 65 years with a no cost to members indoor picnic on August 15, 2023 at the James City County Recreation Center, 5301 Longhill Road. Please let our Secretary, Penny Kell, know of your plans to participate.

Have a great summer break and we look forward to seeing you in August.

Secretary's Corner

We usually have our luncheon meetings with a speaker on the second Tuesday of the month at Colonial Heritage from September through May. This summer we will be having our summer social August 15 at noon at the James Country Recreation Center on Longhill Road. We will also be celebrating our NARFE Chapter 65th Anniversary. Food will be provided by the chapter so there is no cost to attend, but we do need an accurate count as to number of attendees to plan for the food. These is a social event at noon. Last year we had a lot of fun and good food so we expect more of the same. I will be sending out a notice in July to remind everyone and to receive RSVPs.

Our luncheon meetings with speakers will resume in September at Colonial Heritage on September 12. Hope to see everyone at the picnic on August 15.

Words From Our Treasurer by *Larry Leiby, Treasurer*

Our Chapter Budget for Calendar Year 2023 was unanimously approved by the Executive Committee at our March meeting. The chapter income tax return was filed in March. Year to date average attendance, less Guest Speaker(s), at our monthly member meetings was 34.8. Based upon our total Chapter membership, this equates to over 26% participation coming out to enjoy camaraderie with their fellow, federal active and annuitants, experiencing a hearty lunch (with dessert), and hearing stimulating speakers on a variety of topics. Looking forward to seeing more members at our future luncheon meetings!

Our Alzheimer's year to date donations averaged \$104.39 per month. Members who wish to make charitable, tax-deductible donations toward the treatment, prevention and, ultimately, a cure for Alzheimer and enable our Chapter to also get credit should make your check payable to NARFE Alzheimer's Research and include Chapter 685 on the memo line. Send your checks to NARFE #685, P.O. Box 74, Williamsburg, VA 23187-0074.

2023 Tax Bracket Changes. Broadly speaking, the 2023 tax brackets have increased by about 7% for all filing statuses. This is significantly higher than the roughly 3% and 1% increases enacted for 2022 and 2021, respectively.

For taxpayers, this is good news, and it reflects the IRS' intention to align its rates with the economic realities of U.S. citizens. Holding all else constant, it means many taxpayers will experience an increase in take-home pay this year, as more of their earnings will be taxed at lower rates.

However, the Internal Revenue Code contains many other provisions that have also been adjusted for 2023, including the standard deduction and an array of focused deductions and credits, along with corresponding contribution limits and phase-out parameters. Given all the moving parts, taking a fresh look at your withholdings is advisable.

Note: For some high earners, the significant bump in earnings subject to the Social Security payroll tax could offset the economic benefits achieved via higher tax brackets. For 2023, subject earnings have increased by nearly 9%, from \$147,000 to \$160,200.

<https://www.annuity.org/2023/02/07/why-you-should-revisit-your-tax-withholding-in-2023>

I urge you to watch these NARFE videos:

NARFE History <https://youtu.be/NVLIWAQcoLw> 17:32 minutes
NARFE Centennial <https://youtu.be/lpW80Z5axgs> 4:10 minutes

Are you aware that NARFE is on Social Media: NARFE is available at @narfehq? You may also be interested in following OPM (@usopm) or the Thrift Savings Plan (@tsp4gov). NARFE is also on Facebook at facebook.com/NARFEHQ.

NARFE Legislative Actions. Please urge your representative to cosponsor the Social Security Fairness Act of 2023, H.R. 82/S. 597. The Social Security Fairness Act, H.R. 82/S. 597, introduced by Rep. Garret Graves, R-LA, and Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-OH, would fully repeal the WEP and GPO. In addition, urge your representative to cosponsor the Equal COLA Act, H.R. 866. This bill would ensure federal retirees maintain the value of their retirement annuities, earned through careers in public service. It would do so by providing full cost of living adjustments to Federal Employees Retirement System retirees, correcting the unfair policy that caps Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) annual cost of living adjustment (COLA).

Fall 2023 Guest Speakers

September 2023

On September 12, 2023, our speaker will be Deputy Ashley Octaviano from the K-9 Unit of the York County Sheriff's Office. Deputy Octaviano is the handler for Ghost, a German Shepherd, whom she plans to bring with her. Ghost was named the Top Dog in his K-9 class and serves a dual purpose, specializing in explosive and patrol functions for tracking/apprehension. Ghost's first official day on the job was February 2, 2022.

Ghost was purchased from Tarheel Canine in North Carolina. This company specializes in importing and training police service dogs. Deputies travel to Tarheel Canine to select a dog. Once Ghost was selected, he spent the next 5 months training daily. Deputy Octaviano traveled to North Carolina and spent 4 weeks training with Ghost.

October 2023. To be determined

November 2023

On November 14, 2023, we are planning to have four speakers regarding health benefits. Open season will be upon us. There will be a speaker from Aetna, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, GEHA, and new to us this year, United Health Care. They will only have 15 minutes each to speak and answer questions. They usually meet with you on a one-on-one basis after the meeting to answer any questions or concerns. They usually bring great handouts also!

Special Visit and Tour

On May 4, 2023, Mary Grace Dorsey and Ginny Taylor boarded a bus, provided by the Tidewater Virginia Historical Society, to visit and tour Petersburg, Virginia.

First thing we saw on I-64E was a rainbow! Our first stop in Petersburg was the Petersburg Public Library. Inside we saw a beautiful mosaic on the floor, which depicted the historical buildings of Petersburg. Of significant interest was the way the artist had positioned the steeples of the churches outside of the mosaic circle.

Next, we broke up into two groups and boarded trollies. Our next stop was the McIlwain House. Family room was painted salmon, and the owner/guide was wearing a salmon-colored sweater.

We kidded him about that! The house was built in 1815. The owner is a lawyer from Richmond and has traveled the East Coast buying old furniture and artwork to fit into the house. There was a piece of artwork with Confederate soldiers on the top of the hill looking down at the Union soldiers. We were told there were up to 1,000 soldiers painted in that piece of artwork.

Next stop was Battersea Mansion, built in 1767 and remodeled in 1823. It is still a work in progress. It was built near the Appomattox River in a beautiful, peaceful setting.

Lunch was next at Brickhouse Run. Delicious food and wonderful service.

Next, we went to Centre Hill, built in 1819-23, then enhanced in 1840-41. The guide mentioned a 200th anniversary that will be coming up.

Next stop was Blandford Church and Cemetery, 1735-37. The church had beautiful Tiffany-stained glass windows. Above the entrance was a Tiffany-stained glass of the Confederate flag, the only one that Tiffany ever made. Each large Tiffany stained glass window represents a Southern state.

Last stop was Strawberry Hill, c. 1795. This was a Bed & Breakfast but with no breakfast! Very beautiful old home.

Membership News *By Dave Riggs, Membership Chair*

New Members

We are pleased to welcome five new chapter members who joined since our last newsletter was published in March: **Evette Conwell, Mary Ann Hodges, John Primm, Glenn Rolph, and Debra Taylor.** Welcome to Williamsburg Chapter 685! Please be sure to greet these new members personally at our meetings.

Names of new members are obtained from membership statistics and the chapter roster, which are on the NARFE website. Our apologies if we have additional new members and we have not recognized you. Please let us know.

Your NARFE Chapter 685 Needs New Officers and Support Staff To Survive

Yes, it's that critical. NARFE chapters have been folding – some in Virginia – because members have not volunteered to serve as officers. We need members to step forward and fill positions as they become vacant on the chapter's Executive Committee (which is composed of five officers and nine support positions.)

Yes, there's a time commitment. But it's not like returning to the federal job you retired from (or which some members currently have). There are printed, easy-to-follow guidelines; there is online guidance on the NARFE website; and there are people you can contact in the national office if you have questions. Plus, not everyone vacates their position on the chapter's Executive Committee at the same time, so there always are experienced chapter members you can turn to.

New membership on the Executive Committee has its advantages. Different people bring new ideas. Current committee members can “retire” although some of them return later to serve again. And greater involvement in your chapter introduces you to more people and expands your friendships. If you never examined the list before, the five officers are president, 1st vice president, 2nd vice president, secretary, and treasurer. The support positions (sometimes called “chairs”, although it’s usually just one person) are Alzheimer’s chair, Congressional District Liaison, membership, newsletter editor, parliamentarian, past president, program chair, public affairs, and service officer. Feel free to contact any of the current members serving in these positions for more information.

Everyone in the chapter is eligible to be an officer or a member of the support staff. Whether you’ve been a chapter member for years or you joined during the past month, you’re welcome to participate. If you’ve been an officer before, consider rejoining. New officers will be elected this autumn, so give it some thought. And remember that we need officers to keep our chapter functioning.

What is Robert's Rules of Order?

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised is the most widely used parliamentary authority in the United States and was first published as the Pocket Manual of Rules of Order for Deliberative Assemblies in 1876. Since then, the book has been expanded and updated several times, incorporating solutions for countless meeting situations and acknowledging both societal and technological changes that affect the way business is conducted. The current edition of this book is Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12th edition.

Mary Swain, Parliamentarian



In Memory of Liz Snyder

*Chapter 685 remembers...
a long-standing member and chapter president (circa 2004).*

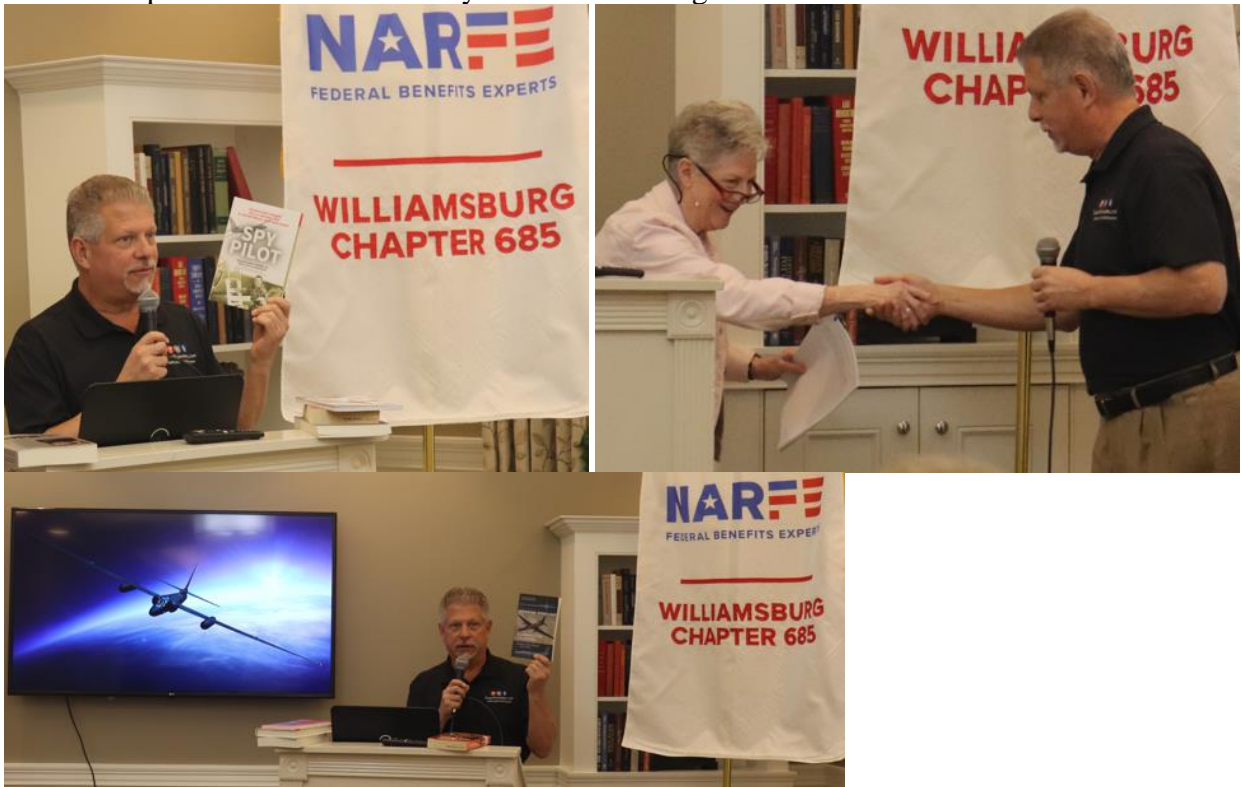
*Liz was instrumental in navigating our chapter during very challenging times.
She will be missed.*

Chapter Photos of Recent Events



(Left Photo) Larry, Cheryl, Mary Grace and Ginny with NARFE national president William Shackelford (right in grey jacket) and Region 10 Vice President Bill Allen (left with red bow tie)
(Right photo) Ginny and Mary Grace's visit to McIlwain House – love that salmon-color paint!

March Chapter Lunch Featured Gary Powers Jr talking about his famous father.



In April, Shari Davies taught us much about the state of the Chesapeake Bay



In May, Rick Correa, Director of major projects, Hampton Roads District, Virginia Department of Transportation and Nina Ullrich VDOT senior communications specialist (below) gave a detailed briefing on large highway projects to improve traffic flow throughout Hampton Roads.



Welcome to our newest chapter members...





***NARFE WILLIAMSBURG CHAPTER 685
65TH ANNIVERSARY***

Did you know that blue sapphire is for the 65th anniversary?



*Chapter 685 Anniversary Celebration
Tuesday, August 15, 2023
at*

*James City County Recreation Center
5201 Longhill Road, Room C
Time: 11:30 am – 2:00 pm*

Food, Cake, & Beverages Provided by Chapter 685

Plus....Games & Prizes



Chapter 685 Executive Committee met Thursday, May 25, 2023.

Participating left to right in rows top to bottom were: Mary Grace Dorsey, 1st vice president, and Larry Leiby, treasurer; Tom Kell, lord of the universe; and Hazel Braxton, president.

Jeff Fratter, past president and newsletter editor; Virginia (Ginny) Taylor, programs; and Jean Garrison, recent Virginia Federation of NARFE Chapters (VFN) area-one vice president.

Dave Riggs, membership; Frances McElroy, service officer; and Penny Kell, treasurer.

Have a Great Summer...