

May 2023



MANASSAS CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

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

Email: narfe356@hotmail.com

Next Meeting Date

May 17

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.

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 of each month.

Master Gardener Program. Rick Reo, Certified Master Gardener. Prince William County Extension Office

Our luncheon speaker will discuss the education and outreach services offered by the County Extension Office, in cooperation with the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, on various yard management issues such as: landscaping, lawn maintenance, gardening, pruning, and pest control.

Rick Reo is a Certified Master Gardener working with the Extension Office. His primary volunteer duties are to provide help support in analyzing homeowners' problems related to plant diseases, insect and pest control, and to provide science-based best practices. Rick has been a homeowner gardener for 22 years. His special interests include vegetable gardening, winter seed sowing, pruning, lawn care, and landscape design. Rick holds master's degrees in Anthropology and in Curriculum & Instruction. He is a retired instructional designer and adjunct instructor at George Mason University.

From The Chapter President

Let's all join in honoring our fellow civil servants next week during Public Service Recognition Week, which this year will take place May 7 – 13. This annual celebration of public service has taken place the first week of May since 1985 and marks a time set aside to honor men and women who serve our nation as federal, state, county and local government employees. I remember when I retired, a new young colleague

made a point of thanking me for my service (almost 39 years—but who's counting) and I felt a great deal of pride and gratitude that this sentiment was not just reserved for members of the military. So many of our fellow civil servants work under difficult conditions and often are put in harms' way. Let's take this opportunity to raise awareness of and appreciation for public service.

Registration is now open on NARFE's website (www.narfe.org) for this year's LEGcon23, NARFE'S premier grassroots training event, which will be held virtually June 20-22, with a pre-training "Know Before You Go" session on June 14 to familiarize registrants with the procedure and instructions for successful participation in the conference and the virtual visits with lawmakers. After a day and a half of virtual training, the conference culminates with a virtual lobbying day, when you will be able to talk directly to your lawmakers and/or their staff about NARFE issues. At LEGcon23 NARFE members will learn to advocate for NARFE'S legislative priorities and how to be an active participant in efforts to protect and defend federal benefits. The registration fee is \$150.

The Virginia Federation of NARFE (VFN) held its Annual Elections on April 3, and Joseph (Larry) McIlwee was elected by acclamation as First Vice President and Patricia Wolfe was elected by acclamation as Second Vice President. There was no nominee for

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Treasurer. There are two candidates for the position of President (Frances Boatman and Doris McAdams) and two candidates for Secretary (Deborah Fisk and Esther Nash). A runoff election is scheduled to begin May 1 through May 31 for the President and Secretary positions by online voting on the VFN website (www.vanarfe.org) or by a mail-in ballot, which will be sent to those who do not have an e-mail address on file with NARFE. All current Chapter 356 members with email addresses on file with NARFE should have received an e-mail or will receive one shortly notifying them that the online voting portal is live. Additional information and the Candidate Statements containing their bios and positions can be found on the VFN website. There are two amendments to the VFN bylaws, which do not affect chapters. Please contact me if any chapter member is interested in the Treasurer position. After eleven years of serving as the Area IX Vice President, Jim Little will be stepping down in July. Please welcome John Bankson, First Vice President of the Annandale Chapter, who has agreed to serve in this position.

Mary M. Brandt

Legislation Update and News of Note

Making Government Services More User Friendly

On April 18, Reps. Katie Porter (D-CA), Gerald Connolly (D-VA) and Kweisi Mfume (D-MD) reintroduced the Trust in Government Act, first introduced in the fall of 2022, that would codify parts of a 2021 executive order that called for agencies to make discrete improvements to government services. The reforms the bill aims to codify include: directions for the Education Department to create a centralized loan repayment portal for student loan borrowers no matter their loan servicer; for the Social Security Administration to make an online process for people applying for services capable of uploading forms or documentation; and for the State Department to set up online passport renewal processes, something the department released on a limited basis last year. The bill has eight other House Democrat co-sponsors and aims to improve the

quality of government services. The bill also includes reporting requirements for agencies, as well as requirements for the Office of Management and Budget to establish a team that would support agencies' work on improving customer experience. The President's budget request for 2024 included over \$500 million relating to customer service improvements in government. Rep. Porter also introduced a bill (H.R. 2688) on April 18 to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require electronically prepared tax returns to include scannable code when submitted on paper so that filing taxes and getting returns would be easier and more efficient.

Source: Government Executive, April 21, 2023

Efforts to Revive Schedule F

A coalition of conservative activist groups led by the Heritage Foundation in mid-April launched Project 2025, a massive recruitment campaign for prospective political appointees in the next Republican presidential administration. Their goal is to create a database of up to 20,000 potential hires into the next Republican presidential administration by the end of 2024 and to reinstate Schedule F, a new job classification within the excepted service for federal workers in policy-related positions, that would transfer competitive service employees into the new category, and strip them of most civil service protections, effectively making them at-will employees. Their vision for a post-Schedule F civil service is that career civil servants by themselves should not lead policy changes and reforms. They believe that reserving positions within the Senior Executive Service for career staffers is contrary to the goals of the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act. They also target federal employee unions, arguing that organized labor is incompatible with government management and endorse the return of Trump administration executive orders aimed at reducing the role of organized labor at federal agencies. Some critics of this effort believe that there are discussions and debates in conservative circles that would hold the entire civil service system as unconstitutional on the grounds that it abridges the president's power under the Constitution to take care that laws are faithfully executed and that their goals of 20,000 candidates for political appointments, while it might be the initial reach of Schedule F, could balloon even further, potentially converting hundreds of thousands of jobs into at-will employment. (See the March Chapter Newsletter for information on the Saving the Civil Service Act (S. 399) introduced in February by Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA) and 14 other Senate Democrats and the companion legislation introduced in the House (H.R. 1002) by Reps. Gerry Con-

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nolly (D-VA), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Abigail Spanberger (D-VA), which 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 and creates a series of new restrictions on how jobs may be reclassified within the confines of the current system. That legislation has been referred to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, and the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, respectively.)

Source: Government Executive, April 24, 2023

WEP and GPO Repeal Update

The Social Security Fairness Act of 2023 ([H.R. 82](#)) reached 223 cosponsors in early April, marking a significant milestone in the 118th Congress for NARFE's fight to pass the bill into law. H.R. 82 is now only 67 cosponsors shy of the 290 cosponsors needed to trigger the House Consensus Calendar rule process that would require either committee advancement or a floor vote. The Senate companion bill ([S. 597](#)) has reached 37 cosponsors. NARFE is urging members to contact your lawmakers today. [Click here](#) to visit NARFE's Legislative Action Center to send your lawmaker a letter asking them to cosponsor this bill to finally repeal the windfall elimination provision (WEP) and the government pension offset (GPO).

Source: NARFE NewsLine, April 18, 2023

Lawmakers Urge OPM Reforms to Address Retirement Processing Delays

A bipartisan group of Senators and Congresspersons sent a [letter](#) on April 3 to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) addressing the agency's slow retirement processing times. The move comes shortly after NARFE urged Congressional appropriators to include adequate funding for and continued oversight of OPM's Retirement Services division's customer service in a 2024 appropriations bill. In their letter, the lawmakers urged OPM to expedite its work to modernize and improve its functions, pointing out that OPM has not met its goal to process retirement claims within 60 days. The letter requested OPM identify its strategy to handle increasing caseloads of retirements without increasing processing time, and posed a series of more general questions to OPM regarding its ef-

orts to modernize and improve retirement services. The lawmakers also pointed out that OPM has rolled out a pilot digital retirement processing system that, if successful, would replace the current paper-based application processing system and requested an update on the performance of the new system, how many digital applications they have processed, and when the agency expects to fully implement the new program.

Source: NARFE NewsLine, April 11, 2023

House Passes Debt Ceiling Bill

On April 26, the House voted 217 to 215 on legislation that would increase the debt ceiling by \$1.5 trillion or suspend it until March 31, 2024 if the government did not hit the new limit by that time. The 2023 Limit, Save and Grow Act would also slash discretionary spending at domestic federal agencies to its fiscal 2022 levels, leading to significant reductions of more than 20% in fiscal 2024. It would also cap annual spending growth to just 1% for the next decade. Federal agency officials have suggested the cuts included in the Limit, Save and Grow Act would force layoffs, furloughs, hiring freezes or other means to trim workforce costs. Customs and Border Protection said, for example, it would be forced to shed 2,400 front-line agents and officers, while the Justice Department said the FBI would lose 11,000 agents. Agencies said tens of thousands of additional jobs would be lost or at risk, including 2,300 at the Food and Drug Administration, 9,400 at the Federal Aviation Administration and 3,200 at the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The bill also rescinds much of the \$80 billion the Internal Revenue Service is set to receive over the next decade as part of the Inflation Reduction Act, funding that is expected to help IRS hire tens of thousands of new employees. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) indicated that the bill was "dead on arrival" in the Senate and President Joe Biden has said he would veto the bill should it reach his desk.

Source: Government Executive, April 27, 2023

NARFE WEBINARS

Upcoming NARFE Webinars:

Mid-Career Reality Check: Golden Handcuffs or a Move to the Private Sector?

Wednesday, May 17, 2023 at 2 p.m. ET

We've all heard of the seven-year "itch" in a marriage, but happiness with your career can also decline after seven, 10, 12 and 15 years. If you're a mid-career federal employee, and you're thinking of joining the private sector, you need to know what federal benefits you have earned, how to protect them, and how to make sure they're waiting for you when you retire.

Join us as federal benefits expert Tammy Flanagan walks you through what you should know and what you should consider if you're thinking about leaving federal service, including:

- The age and service requirements that you need to qualify for retirement, and how to weigh the benefit of accruing eligibility.
 - How to compare the value of your federal compensation package (both salary and the benefits) to the value of the private sector compensation package
 - How to estimate future retirement benefits – and how to preserve records helpful to collecting them – if you leave
 - What alternatives exist to leaving federal service
- And more!

Deciding whether you should leave the federal government is complicated. Let NARFE help guide you through this important decision. Register today!

Recent NARFE Webinars:

Tax Planning for Federal Retirees: It's What You Keep That Counts

Thursday, April 6, 2023

In this webinar, Mark Keen, CFP®, provides a brief overview of the U.S. tax system, how retiree income sources are taxed, and examples of how income taxes and stealth taxes can erode spending power and the value of retirement accounts. The webinar will introduce participants to commonsense strategies they may use to maximize after-tax income.

This presentation will help you understand:

- How the U.S. tax system works
- How federal benefits are taxed
- CSRS annuity
- FERS annuity
- Social Security
- TSP withdrawals
- Strategies to minimize taxes on TSP withdrawals
- Why delaying TSP withdrawals may be a bad idea
- How investments held outside of a retirement plan are taxed
- Stealth taxes
- Medicare Part B premiums and IRMAA
- Social Security tax torpedo
- Net Investment Income Tax
- How to use Qualified Charitable Donations to reduce taxes
- The TSP's mandatory withholding rules and why it's not your actual tax liability.

It's vital to incorporate tax planning into your overall financial strategy. Knowing how to maximize the after-tax value of your hard-earned savings can turn a good retirement into a great retirement.

[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, April 19th

Chapter 356 held its regular monthly meeting, with 12 members and guests present. Guest speaker, Captain Jim Porter (USN, Retired), President of the Freedom Museum Board of Directors, gave a presentation on the museum.

Capt. Porter noted that the Freedom Museum was founded by Chuck Colgan, Jr. (a Vietnam Veteran and son of State Senator Charles Colgan) in 1999 and was initially housed at the Manassas Airport. The museum has now relocated to 9129 Center Street in the Hibbs and Giddings Historical Building in Old Towne Manassas. The goal of its founder was to honor the men and women who have served the country in times of war and peace from World War I to the present and to ensure that their stories would not be forgotten. A wall of remembrance contains the names of those residents of Prince William County, Manassas and Manassas Park who died in service of the country during wartime, including those civilians who perished at the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. The museum houses artifacts and source documents. Capt. Porter shared examples of each with members: a "cricket" communications device used by paratroopers on D Day and a Rosie the Riveter pay check. Admission to the museum is free, however, donations are welcome, since the museum relies primarily on fund raisers, local businesses and other donations to support its speaker series, educational programs, museum tours and preservation efforts. The Freedom Museum is open on the first Friday of the month from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm, on Saturdays from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm and on Sundays from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Guided tours can be arranged or you may conduct self-guided tours. For additional information see www.freedommuseum.org.

A short business meeting was conducted after the presentation, with officer and committee reports. The Minutes of the March 15 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 indicated that with the Congress in recess there was no news on new national legislation im-

pecting federal workers or retirees. Chapter member Bill Briscoe gave a briefing on the Virginia Federation of NARFE's annual conference in Hampton Roads, which he attended April 2-5. Briscoe noted that he has attended the conference for the past five years and that each year the attendance has grown smaller, with only 85 Virginia Federation members in attendance this year. He noted that NARFE President Bill Shackelford addressed the convention and that there were two individuals running for President of the Virginia Federation. The raffle for the Alzheimer's Fund netted \$19 for Alzheimer's Research. The chapter has collected \$232 for the Alzheimer's Fund to date.

The next regular monthly meeting for Chapter 356 is scheduled for May 17 at the Hibachi Buffet. The next Executive Committee meeting will be held via Zoom at 1:00 on May 2, the first Tuesday of the month. All members are welcome to attend the Executive Committee meetings held on the first Tuesday of each month. Any member wishing to do so should contact one of the chapter officers to obtain the Zoom link.

Mary M. Brandt,
Secretary



Guest speaker, Captain Jim Porter (USN, Retired), President of the Freedom Museum Board of Directors

Alzheimer's Corner
Marilyn Markman, RN

This will be an FYI article and some of the information will be expounded on in the future.

TBOO6 is a medication that is starting Phase 2. Nearly half of the Alzheimer's patients given TB006 in the past 3 months show signs of disease reversal or cognitive improvement. TB006 will be tested and studied for at least 2 years and this is something worth watching!

Therapeutic fibbing is when you tell a fib or bend the truth to fit the reality of a person who has dementia. Experts in the field are refining their approach to therapeutic fibbing beginning with a name change. Creative Communication Techniques will include diverting attention, redirecting the conversation and distraction. Doing this will prevent patient upset.

Vitamin B12 (aka cobalamin) deficiency can cause or worsen cognitive impairment or walking problems. It is especially vital to making red blood cells and maintaining proper functions of nerve cells. The most common problems related to low B12 include:

- anemia
- neuropathy- nerves in the body are not working well causing a variety of symptoms including tingling, numbness, burning, poor balance and walking difficulties
- cognitive impairment - nerve cells to the brain are not working well, which can cause memory problems, irritability and even dementia

Governor Glenn Youngkin has signed into law legislation that would require law enforcement recruits to have dementia - specific training as they begin their careers. The training will help ensure that appropriate techniques are used to assist individuals displaying signs of cognitive impairment.

Pets can be a "lifesaver" for families coping with Alzheimer's and other dementias. Animals offer affection and unconditional love, provide an opportunity for meaningful chores (walking a dog, grooming a cat), and introduce fun into one's life - watching a cat play with toys or a dog chasing a ball. They also provide sensory stimulation - having a pet on a lap or sitting next to you provides comfort and may reduce agitation and anxiety, and they promote socialization - talking about pet, learning about pet, seeing children and adults interacting with pet. They can also offer an excuse to get outside. There is a lot to consider when having a pet. Among them is the stage of dementia and ability to care for a pet. An alternative is having someone bring a pet to the dementia person. If it is possible the benefit of a pet is huge.

Hope you learned something new from this article - this is only a tip of the iceberg for Alzheimer/dementia information. While we are learning more and more about Alzheimer's, with your help through NARFE, researchers are working harder for a treatment and a cure for this awful disease.

Chapter 356 Membership Report for April 2023

1 new member
 2 dropped for nonrenewal

Welcome to our Chapter
 Joseph Klimlowski

Chapter 356 membership as of April 30 is 129 members.

CHAPTER 356 OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES		
President (Interim)	Mary Brandt	703-753-3954
Vice President	Priscilla Saboe	703-361-1150
Secretary	Mary Brandt	703-753-3954
Treasurer	Richard Horte	703-368-8767
Membership Comm.	Helen Brooks	703-791-6737
National Legislation	Vacant	
Program Comm.	Vacant	
Service Officer	Priscilla Saboe	703-361-1150
Sunshine Comm.	Priscilla Saboe	703-361-1150
Alzheimer's Comm.	Marilyn Markman, RN	703-791-4329
Chapter Chaplain	Vacant	
Newsletter Editor	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/. Scroll down to Current Chapter Newsletters, Area IX, Chapter 356.