

VFC President's Annual Report – 2006

The Virginia Federation of Chapters (VFC) Board had an active and challenging year. This report booklet cannot possibly capture all of the VFC's work, but it highlights important accomplishments. The hard work by the VFC Board members is recognized and appreciated.

The year started with major leadership changes on the Board. Of the 22-positions with voting privileges, 11 had new incumbents elected by delegates at the 2005 Convention or appointed by the incoming VFC President. Four new appointee positions were established. Three Board members resigned during the year for personal reasons: The Database Coordinator, the Treasurer, and the Backup Net Coordinator. Also, we were saddened by the loss of VFC Past President Ernie Kerekes in October 2005 (who was also serving as AVP II at the time of his death) and Walter Kahle (former Database Coordinator, who resigned in May 2005 and lost his battle with cancer in March 2006). Appointments were made to serve those remaining terms: Mag Garth (Newsletter Editor and Database Coordinator position combined), Joan Marvel (Area II VP), and Darlene Myer Rhodes (Treasurer).

During April – December 2005, we were saddened by the deaths of three VFC Past Presidents. In addition to Ernie Kerekes (Metro Chapter 5), Jim Richards (Falls Run Chapter 2343), and J. Donald Edwards (Alexandria Chapter 232) passed away. Our sincere condolences to their families and to Mrs. Kahle.

The underlying theme and tone was set for the year focusing on a broad NARFE awareness effort in reaching out into all VFC and NARFE activities and events working toward making NARFE a household name in Virginia. The mantra of that theme encouraged our members to display "hearts big enough to dream, bold enough to dare, and warm enough to care." As your President, I focused on showing a VFC NARFE presence as much as possible to our membership, legislators, and others in Virginia organizations and communities by participating in numerous chapter meetings and events, NARFE-PAC events, meetings with both congressional and state legislators, and meetings/activities sponsored by other organizations. During the year, communications between the VFC and chapters have been enhanced by (1) the periodic Memos from the VFC President directly to chapter presidents providing information updates, (2) the upgrading of the VFC host service for the VFC web site, www.vanarfe.org, and VANARFE emails allowing more flexibility in both areas, such as the addition of separate program area web pages (National Legislation, Public Relations, Service, Alzheimers) for reference and program information updates, and (3) the expansion of services offered to our chapters via our partnership with SeniorNavigator (an information resource for Virginia senior citizens) to include NARFE chapter information in its database and community calendar for posting on its web site, www.seniornavigator.com.

As VFC Coordinator and Chair of the 2005 Convention Committee, I'm pleased to report a net profit of \$4,005 was forwarded to the VFC Treasurer in June 2005. (There were over 300 registrations, generating \$6,505 profit before paying the \$2,500 hotel penalty fee for changing the date due to Passover. The penalty fee was applied against providing other services, such as the President's breakfast and Danish/coffee.) In August 2005, VFC sponsored travel generated revenue of \$3,130. The VFC is currently sponsoring a post-convention trip to Santa Fe and Durango in conjunction with the 2006 NARFE National Convention. Other Federations have been invited to join the VFC for this travel adventure. In July, the Board approved the initial budget and adopted these goals to guide our chapters:

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(1) Membership - At least a net increase of five percent during 2005 calendar year. *(Although the VFC had over 500 recruitments from one project alone, we ended 2005 with 19,915 members, a net loss of 161 from the previous year. At the January 2006 meeting, the Board adopted the same goal for 2006 calendar year.)*

(2) Dues Withholding – At least 15% increase in enrollments over two years ending December 2006. *(This goal was exceeded by adding 15% new dues withholders by the end of the first year - December 2005.)*

(3) National Legislation - Contributions to NARFE-PAC of \$85,000 during the 109th Congress (January 1, 2005 - December 31, 2006), based on VFC contributions of \$83,400 for the 108th Congress. *(As of December 2005--about half-way through this Congress--contributions were only \$9,000. We have a lot of catching up to do. In January 2006, the VFC established Congressional District Liaisons (CDL) for Virginia's 11 districts and approved a \$1,000 budget for the CDLs with direct oversight by the VFC National Legislation Chair.)*

(4) State Legislation - Contributions to the VFC State Political Account of \$30,000 for 2005-06 (12 months through June 2006). *(After distribution of funds in October 2005 to 43 designated recipients totaling \$9,300 and contributions received since, the VFC State Political Account balance is only \$3,326 as of March 31, 2006. This account needs a quick fix!)*

(5) Alzheimer's - Contributions to Alzheimer's of \$55,000 during 2005 calendar year had been previously adopted by the 2005 VFC Convention delegation. *(VFC contributions for calendar year 2005 were \$58,851, exceeding the goal.)*

Mr. David Sadowski, then President of the Virginia Coalition for Aging (VCA), was the guest speaker at the July Board meeting. The VFC is one among about 100 organizations belonging to the VCA to collaborate on issues to improve the quality of life for Virginia's senior citizens.

The leaders in our 56 chapters are the linchpins for the Federation. They are responsible for the care and feeding of the grass roots—the chapter members. The Federation provides guidance and assistance when needed via the ten area vice presidents, our liaisons with chapters. The Federation sponsored events or supported Chapters in reaching out into local NARFE communities to raise the general awareness of NARFE by approving requests and, in some cases, providing some of the funds under National's "Matching Funds" program for these events/activities:

- 4th of July Parade, Dale City, VA. - Woodbridge Chapter 1270
- Virginia State Fair, Richmond, VA. – Area III chapter members staffed a booth for 11 days, partnering with SeniorNavigator.
- Annual Peanut Fest, Suffolk, VA. – Suffolk Chapter 1743
- Senior Beacon Info Expo, Springfield Mall, VA. - Springfield Chapter 893
- Fall Festival Parade, Annandale, VA. – Annandale Chapter 1159
- Health Fairs at six locations in the Hampton Roads area – Peninsula Chapter 682
- 2005 SeniorNavigator Compass Rose Awards, Bronze Sponsor – VFC
- TRIAD Senior's Day, Chesterfield, VA - VFC
- Cosponsoring a Legislative Forum with the NOVA Aging Network and AARP, Greenspring Conference Center, Springfield, VA. – VFC
- NARFE ZAP retractable banner display purchased for shared use by chapters – VFC

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In conjunction with the 2005 Convention, the Federation sponsored a one-time advance ticket offering to win a handmade quilt with contributions to benefit NARFE-FEEA Scholarship and Disaster funds. The winner was Betty Atkinson, Seaside Chapter 1827. Total contributions were \$2,510, exceeding the \$2,000 goal. Also, at the September meeting, the Board approved a \$2,600 donation to NARFE-FEEA Disaster Fund to provide assistance to NARFE member hurricane victims.

Highlights of my personal involvement the past year:

- Visited 23 chapters (now visited 48 of our 56 chapters during the past four years; 22 chapters at my own expense when campaigning for 2nd VP).
- Attended Region X Federation President's Conference, Johnson City, TN.
- Interviewed on *NARFE Presents*, TV program sponsored by NOVA Caucus.
- Served as Delegate, VA 11th, and NARFE representative at the White House Conference on Aging (WHCOA), Washington, DC, December 2005 (attended numerous meetings relative to WHCOA with VA Association of Area Agencies and VA Department of Aging Council).
- Served as Silver Representative, VA 11th, and NARFE representative at the National Silverhaired Congress Session, Washington, DC, February 2006.
- Attended NARFE-PAC Events for Representatives Tom Davis, Thelma Drake, Randy Forbes, and Frank Wolf.
- Visited legislators: Representative Tom Davis and legislative staff from offices of Representative Cantor (Washington office), Rep. Boucher (Abingdon Office), and Senator Warner (Washington office).
- Attended numerous meetings with an opportunity to talk with State Legislators: Delegates Howell, Suit, Crockett-Stark, Rust, Watts, Wright, as well as Senators Chichester, DeVolites-Davis, Stosch, and Reynolds. (In November 2005, I sent a letter to each of the 100 delegates and 40 senators informing them of the VFC's legislative agenda. I was pleasantly surprised at the number of cordial responses made personally by the legislators.)
- Served as a Jump Start speaker on "Leadership" at the NARFE Chapter Management Symposium, Harrisburg, PA. (Seventeen members of the VFC Board attended the Symposium.)
- Accepted a Leadership award on behalf of the VFC, presented by former Governor Warner at the 2005 SeniorNavigator Compass Rose Awards Night.
- Elected to the Board of Directors, Virginia Coalition on Aging (November 2005). Appointed to the VCA Policy Committee to develop the 2007 agenda.
- Attended the VFC sponsored training sessions at four locations to provide opening and closing remarks as well as an update of VFC activities.

I would like to express a special thank you to chapter leaders for your continuous support. I am proud to have served as VFC President this past year and, if reelected, I will continue to support our chapters in reaching out to raise the awareness of NARFE and to apply the 3E's (educate - encourage - energize) to our membership. A well-known identity and strength in numbers will make a difference. NARFE may become a household name in Virginia, yet!

Ann M. Collins