

## NARFE Chapter 1116 Newsletter

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

**SEPTEMBER 2023**

**Next Chapter Meeting**  
**Tuesday, September 19, 2023**  
**1:00 PM - Auditorium**  
**Vienna Community Center**

**Next Board Meeting**  
**Thursday, September 28, 2023**  
**1:00 PM**  
**Vienna Community Center**

### 2023 Board

#### Chapter Officers

President  
Kathy Arpa 703-205-9041  
mkarpa@hotmail.com

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President & Programs  
Ralph Dantine 703-938-9757

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  
703-938-2274

National Legislation  
Jim Hathaway 703-255-7135

State Legislation  
Chris Gieseler 703-849-0008

Newsletter Team  
Kathy Arpa, Dave Graf

Public Relations  
Pec Chan 703-930-3596

Service Officer  
Susan Larson 703-915-2566

Sunshine  
Harriet Epstein 703-560-4137

### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – KATHY ARPA**

Welcome back. I hope you are having a good summer. Our June picnic at Jayne Seidman's home was tasty with loads of delicious food and good company. There was a lot of activity in our chapter this summer. See Harriet's Sunshine Report on Page 6.

I attended the VFN Board Meeting in Charlottesville in July. Our new officers were present and installed by National President Bill Shackelford. Frances Boatman was elected President by ballot in June and Debbie Fisk was elected Secretary. Other officers are Larry McIlwee, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Pat Wolfe, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President and Thomas Rachele, Treasurer. Ted Pasek will remain as our Area X Vice President.

The VFN Annual Report has been posted. It is up on the web page under Resources and Files. Here is the link.

<https://vanarfe.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/VFN-Annual-Report-2023.pdf>

Mark and I will attend the Region X Conference in Frankfort, Kentucky on September 12-14. We will join members from Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

In June we invited the candidates for Vienna Town Council and the Mayor of Vienna to our September NARFE meeting for a forum. They have all agreed to attend so we are looking forward to an interesting meeting. The 2023 Vienna Mayor and Town Council election will be on the November General Election ballot this year for the first time ever. Eight Town Council candidates are running to fill six seats. Mayor Linda Colbert faces no opposition. Candidates for Town Council are Sandra D. Allen, Charles "Chuck" Anderson, Roy J. Baldwin, Ray S. Brill, Elizabeth D. Korondy, Shelley M. Mountjoy, Jessica H. Ramakis and Howard Springsteen. The meeting has been announced in the Vienna Business Association calendar which should generate a lot of interest and many guest attendees. See announcement on Page 6.

*Kathy*

## **COMING UP**

**September 12-14 – 2023 Region X Conference – Capital Plaza Hotel located at 405 Wilkinson Blvd. in Frankfort, Kentucky**

**September 19 – Chapter Meeting – 1 PM – Town of Vienna Candidates Forum - Vienna Community Center Auditorium (**note change of date**)**

**October 10 – Chapter Meeting – 1 PM – Representative from Blue Cross and Blue Shield**

**November 14 – Chapter Meeting – 1 PM – Dr. Kelsey Trinkka will speak on hearing loss and solutions. We will also have Election of Officers.**

**November 18 - Congressman Gerry Connolly's Annual Health Fair will be held in the Fairfax County Government Center. 10 AM to 1 PM. NARFE will also have a table at the Health Fair.**

**December 12 – 11:30 AM - Annual Holiday Party. Location TBD & Installation of Officers for 2024.**

### **MEMBERSHIP REPORT – JAYNE SEIDMAN**

As of August 30, 2023, the membership for Chapter 1116 is as follows: Total Current Chapter members – 170, Total National Members in Chapter Area - 137, Grand Total – 307. Lifetime members 20.

We welcome two new members to our Chapter, who are James Renner and Jose Ramos. We mourn the passing of longtime member John Horejsi.

### **CHAPTER PICNIC REPORT – DAVE GRAF**

Seventeen members and guests attended the ‘inside’ picnic which was held at the home of Chapter 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Jayne Seidman on June 13th. The Chapter provided double-dipped and baked chicken, iced tea, and lemonade. Attendees brought a variety of sides and desserts. Thanks to everyone for their contributions. A very enjoyable time was had by all. Also joining us was Ted Pasek, our Area X Vice President.

### **TREASURER’S REPORT – DAVE GRAF**

This report covers all transactions that have occurred since the June Newsletter.

During this period, we received \$235.68 for membership dues collected by NARFE’s National Headquarters for the months of May, June, and July. Also, \$20.00 was donated by a member and a guest at the June Chapter Picnic.

Our only expense was \$35.48 to reimburse Dave Graf for the purchase of the chicken and beverages for the Chapter Picnic held on June 13th.

## SERVICE OFFICER REPORT – SUSAN LARSON

As a result of the recent weather catastrophes in Maui, California, and Florida, I began to wonder how in the world would someone begin to put their homes and lives back together when everything, and I mean everything, in your home is destroyed. What would you do?

Fortunately, I periodically receive articles from the Fairfax County Emergency Information Office, and I wanted to share with you the most recent information I received as it contains important information on emergency preparedness.

### EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS -- KEEP COPIES OF IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS IN A SECURE LOCATION

Having copies of identification, insurance information and other critical documents in a safe place outside of your home is an **important part of emergency preparedness**.

In an emergency like a natural disaster or home fire, quick access to important documents can be vital, yet may be impossible if the originals are damaged or destroyed at your home. Making copies of these documents to keep in a secure offsite location is a prudent preparation step everyone should take.

Originals Alone are Vulnerable – Originals of essential documents kept only at your home are at risk for damage, theft, or loss in a disaster. Maintaining copies in a secure location ensures you have backup versions to prove identity, ownership, and entitlements if originals are unavailable. Which Documents to Copy:

#### Identification and Residency Documents

- Driver's licenses
- Passports
- Social Security cards
- Citizenship papers
- Military identification
- Green cards or Visa documents

#### Insurance Policies

- Health insurance
- Life insurance
- Homeowners or Renters insurance
- Flood insurance
- Disability insurance
- Vehicle insurance

#### Financial Account Records

- Bank and Investment accounts
- Credit and Debit cards

- Mortgage documents
- Tax returns
- Trusts and Wills
- Retirement Accounts
- Certificates of Deposit

#### Medical Documents

- Prescriptions
- Vaccination records
- Medical history summary
- Disability paperwork

#### Home Ownership Evidence

- Deeds
- Vehicle Titles
- Bills of Sale

#### Other Essentials

- Marriage and Birth Certificates
- Divorce Decrees
- Child Custody paperwork
- Pet Licenses and Vaccinations

### Safe Locations to Store Copies

- **Safe Deposit Box:** A safe deposit box at your bank provides very secure offsite storage. Inventory contents annually.
- **With Trusted Contact:** Keep copies with a responsible relative or friend in another geographic area. Update them whenever you add documents.
- **Encrypted Cloud Storage:** Upload scanned copies to a secure digital cloud storage service. Ensure proper permissions are set.
- **Password Protected USB Drive:** Keep an encrypted external drive in a secure physical location like a workplace or safe.
- **Fireproof Safe:** Consider keeping copies in a home safe but have backups in alternate locations in case the entire property is damaged.

## **LEGISLATION REPORTS**

### **National Legislation – Jim Hathaway**

Congress was in recess for the month of August. The Senate was back in session on Tuesday, September 5 and the House will return on September 12.

Earlier, before the recess, the Senate passed its version of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), voting 86 to 11 in favor of the bill. The legislation authorizes a 5.2 percent pay increase for military service members and Department of Defense civilian workers for January 2024. This further increases the likelihood of a 5.2 percent pay increase for the federal workforce. Lawmakers in the House and Senate will negotiate a final NDAA when they return in September.

NARFE wrote to Senators about two submitted amendments, one that would block the return of the merit-system breaking Schedule F and another that would disrupt the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). The anti-Schedule F amendment, entered by Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) was not considered by the full chamber. However, in a surprise move, the amendment submitted by Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) which would effectively end the TSP I Fund and the recently implemented mutual fund window, did receive a last-minute vote. The amendment required a 60-vote threshold for passage, which it failed to reach by a vote of 55 to 42.

Senator Marco Rubio's effort to end the TSP I fund in the federal U.S. pension plan was to prevent investing in Chinese-listed shares. This effort puts pressure on administrators of the TSP to reverse a decision to allow one of its funds to track an index that includes China-based stocks.

### **January 2024 COLA Update**

Under current law, cost-of-living-adjustments (COLAs) for federal retirement annuities, as well as for military retiree annuities and Social Security payments are determined by the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W), which is calculated by economists and statisticians with the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The CPI-W is the current index used for measuring increases in the prices of consumer goods, including food and beverages, housing, clothing, transportation, medical care, recreation, education, communication, and more.

Relevant to the COLA to civil service annuities for 2024, the CPI-W increased by 0.2 percent in July 2023. The CPI-W figure for July 2023 was 299.899. This was 2.7 percent higher than the average CPI-W for the third quarter of 2022, which was 291.901 (for reference 1982-84 = 100). The annual COLA is determined by comparing the change in the CPI-W from year to year, based on the average of the third-quarter months of July, August, and September.

### **Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA) COLAs**

FECA provides coverage to Federal civilian employees who have sustained work-related injuries or disease. Looking ahead to the 2024 COLA for FECA benefits, the July 2023 CPI-W figure (299.899) is 3 percent higher than the December 2022 CPI-W figure (291.051).

## Virginia State Legislation – Chris Gieseler

Budget Negotiations in Richmond: According to media sources, budget negotiations have been going on behind the scenes to address the large surplus in Virginia’s finances. Recently, Governor Youngkin encouraged the negotiators to complete the budget deal soon. On August 25, 2023, the budget negotiators reached agreement on the larger issues that had been debated. The negotiators subsequently completed the final touches of the deal. The tentative deal would provide one-time payments this year of \$200 for individuals and \$400 for couples. The tentative deal increases the standard deduction to \$8,500 for individuals and to \$17,000 for couples. The deal also eliminates age requirements regarding the military retirement benefits subtraction from Virginia income taxes. The sales tax holiday also returns. Spending increases in the deal are focused on funding education at all levels.

On August 30, 2023, Governor Youngkin summoned the General Assembly to a Special Session on September 6<sup>th</sup> to consider the budget agreement. If passed, the budget bill would then go to the Governor for his consideration.

Virginia Federation of NARFE (VFN) 2024 Legislative Plan: I have been working with Ms. Debbie Fisk (the Secretary of the VFN and interim State Legislation Chair) and the rest of the VFN Legislative Team in developing items to include in the 2024 VFN Legislative Plan and associated Talking Points. A Zoom meeting was held in July 2023. Since then, the Team has exchanged drafts of those talking points. Currently, there are four legislative items under consideration for the Plan:

1. Allow a portion of Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) benefits to be subtracted from Virginia taxes to be comparable to the subtractions for Social Security, Railroad Retirement, and military retirement benefits in the current Virginia tax code. Currently, there is no subtraction for CSRS benefits.
2. Expand Virginia’s \$12,000 age deduction by eliminating means-testing that currently applies to taxpayers 65 years and older.
3. Enact nursing care laws to: (1) require minimum nursing home staffing levels. (2) devote appropriated funds for the Virginia Center of Aging’s Geriatric Education Center Initiative to develop skills and capacities for the geriatric workforce; and (3) provide living wages, overtime pay, and training for direct care workers to build a quality workforce.
4. Provide for a Family Caregiver Tax Credit of up to \$1,000, subject to limitations on compensation, AGI, and residence. The credit would go to a family member who incurs expenses for providing care for an “eligible family member” regarding “activities of daily living.” The tax credit would not be refundable, but the excess can be carried over for five tax years.

I have drafted two versions of a “thoughts paper” on Item 1 which will lead to a draft White Paper/talking points document to be shared with the Legislative Team. I have also provided comments on a White Paper regarding Item 2 regarding the age deduction. I expect future Team meetings and document exchanges to happen in the next few weeks, so we can finalize our thoughts, positions and documents before the Plan goes to the VFN Board for approval.

## SUNSHINE REPORT – HARRIET EPSTEIN

Sympathy to the family of John Horejsi who passed away on August 4 after a long battle with cancer. John worked for the Office of Family Assistance Welfare Management Institute, now located in the Department of Health and Human Services. He was also the founder of SALT (Social Action Living Together) which has over 1,000 members.

We sent best wishes to our former Virginia Legislature Delegate Mark Keam who is recovering from surgery.

We also sent get well wishes to Irene Coyne who fell and broke her femur. She is recovering at the Dulles Health & Rehab Center in Herndon.



Congratulations to Shirley Martin (pictured here) who celebrated her **98<sup>th</sup>** birthday in July. Congratulations to Adrian Van Huizen who celebrated his **103<sup>rd</sup>** birthday on August 31. Best wishes to Kathy Arpa who will celebrate her birthday on September 13<sup>th</sup> while she is attending the Region X Conference in Frankfort, KY.

Congratulations to Chris & Stella Gieseler on their **40<sup>th</sup>** Wedding Anniversary which was on September 3. They celebrated in Williamsburg for a few days with family and friends. We know they had a wonderful time despite the heat wave!

Congratulations to Dolores and Bill Inch on the birth of their granddaughter Lucy Ann on August 29.

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

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**CANDIDATES  
FORUM**

Vienna Town Council Candidates Forum  
Hosted by NARFE  
**September 19, 2023, 1-2PM**  
Vienna Community Center Auditorium

All are invited to attend!

Town Council Candidates will be given 5 to 6 minutes to introduce themselves and share their goals for the future of the Town of Vienna.  
Q&A will follow if time allows.