

September 2023



Email: narfe356@hotmail.com

MANASSAS CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

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

Next Meeting Date

September 20

****New Location****

Bob Evans
10830 Promenade Ln.,
Manassas, VA

Lunch
11:30 AM

Program
12:15 PM

Bob Evans is located at the intersection of Sudley and Balls Ford Roads. Parking entrance is at rear of restaurant on Promenade Lane next to Sonic Drive-in.

Funeral Planning, Michael Salley, Director of Pre-need, Pierce Funeral Home

Our speaker will discuss the benefits and the process of pre-planning funeral arrangements ensuring that your wishes are known.

Michael is currently the Director of Pre-need for Pierce Funeral Home here in Manassas. He has been in the industry for over 20 years. He is a graduate of John Tyler CC with an Associate's Degree in Applied Science in Mortuary Science. He then completed an Internship with a well-respected Funeral Home in the Richmond area before obtaining his Funeral Directing/Mortician License. Michael also completed the necessary requirements to obtain his Insurances License. These 2 licenses together are what allow him to practice funeral directing, embalming, and arranging pre-need funerals in the State of Virginia.

I have asked our Alzheimer's Chair Marilyn Markman to reach out to members in lieu of a formal nominating committee. I ask our members once again to consider stepping forward to help keep our chapter going; otherwise, we will have no other recourse than to consider closing the chapter. In addition, the Executive Committee has agreed beginning in 2024 to only hold chapter meetings every other month in order to lighten the load on our volunteers. As noted in the past, all of the current officers are doing double and in some cases triple duty serving multiple officer and committee chair positions and last year some of our volunteers have had to take a step back from active participation due to their own or family health concerns. We really do need you to take an active role in the chapter! If you are willing to volunteer to run for Secretary or serve on a committee, please contact Marilyn or me by phone (our numbers are listed on p. 7 of this Newsletter) or I can be reached via [e-mail—mmbrandt@verizon.net](mailto:mmbrandt@verizon.net).

All of the seats in the State of Virginia House of Delegates and in the Senate are on the ballot for election during the 2023 November General Election. Early voting begins on September 22. See page 4 for additional information.

Several of our members have indicated that they are not receiving the Chapter Newsletter or other NARFE notifications, despite being listed on the distribution list for the NARFE e-mail system from which these messages are sent. I would

From The Chapter President

NOTICE: In accordance with the Chapter Bylaws, Chapter 356 will hold its annual meeting and election of officers at the October 18 meeting. Vice President Priscilla Saboe and Treasurer Richard Horte have agreed to stand for reelection for another one-year term. I am willing to run for the office of President, but will no longer try and juggle the responsibilities of President and Secretary. I have been serving as Secretary of Chapter 356 since October 2011 and as Interim President since appointment by the Executive Committee in the summer of 2022 upon the resignation of the late Joseph Powell. We are, therefore, in need of a volunteer willing to run for the office of Secretary.

Future Meetings:

Chapter luncheon meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month.

Our Executive Committee is now meeting virtually on the first Tuesday of each month.

(Continued on page 2)

suggest checking your spam or junk folders, since often e-mails that are mass mailed to a large number of recipients are diverted from the recipients' in-box. The Newsletter can also be accessed on the Virginia Federation of NARFE'S website—www.vanarfe.org. I am also happy to forward a copy to anyone who contacts me via my e-mail address listed above.

Mary M. Brandt
Interim President

Legislation Update and News of Note

2024 Federal Pay Raise

On August 31, President Joe Biden formalized his plan to provide civilian federal employees with an average 5.2% pay increase, their largest in four decades, in a [letter to congressional leaders](#). If implemented, federal employees will see an across-the-board increase in basic pay of 4.7% and an average 0.5% boost to locality pay.

Source: Government Executive, August 31, 2023

FY 2024 Appropriations

The House and Senate appeared headed for a short-term spending deal when lawmakers return to Washington following the August recess, with leaders from both chambers suggesting they are pursuing that path to avoid a shutdown in October. The continuing resolution would keep agencies funded at their current levels through early December. The Senate Appropriations Committee has now approved all 12 annual must-pass spending measures. The House counterpart, meanwhile, has approved bills solely along partisan lines after it used spending levels set below those to which Republican leadership and President Biden agreed as part of the Fiscal Responsibility Act. The full House approved one spending bill—funding the Veterans Affairs Department—without any Democratic support before the August recess. If Congress has not passed line-by-line appropriations for each agency by Jan. 1, an automatic, across-the-board 1% cut from current levels will take effect.

Source: Government Executive, August 16, 2023

White House Urges Continuing Resolution

On August 31, the White House urged Congress to adopt a short-term measure to fund the federal government to buy time for lawmakers to craft a broader spending deal and avert a shutdown at the end of September. The Biden administration also requested that Congress address funding for a series of cash-starved programs — including an additional \$1.4 billion to prevent a potential disruption in nutritional aid for low-income families. The adoption of a continuing resolution (CR) would preserve most spending at its existing levels as negotiations proceed on FY 2024 appropriations. Even with such a stopgap, the Office of Management and Budget said that some federal accounts would need spending increases, such as the Women, Infants and Children nutrition program, known as WIC, which provides monthly aid to roughly 6.6 million poor families. With food prices still high and program participation on the rise, its existing, roughly \$5.69 billion budget is not sufficient to provide benefits at their current level through next fiscal year. On the other hand, the plan put forward by House Republicans would seek to roll back funding for WIC recipients, for example, reducing the amount some receive for fruits and vegetables to about \$11 a month. The White House said any CR must include a series of other special budget fixes, known as anomalies, including: \$1.9 billion for the Office of Refugee Resettlement; and funding that would allow federal agencies to spend more rapidly to prepare for pandemics, oversee Medicare, process student loan applications and payments, and review claims for Social Security benefits.

Source: The Washington Post, August 31, 2023

Supplemental Funding Request

On August 10, the White House requested \$40 billion to support efforts at the Defense Department and other agencies across government, saying the emergency spending was necessary to sustain critical activities. The supplemental funding request included \$24 billion to assist Ukraine, including money for the Pentagon; the departments of Treasury, Health and Human Services, and Energy; and the U.S. Agency for International Development. About \$4 billion would go to the departments of Homeland Security, State, Justice and Labor for border operations as the Biden administration looks to ensure it has adequate resources for law enforcement personnel, migrant sheltering and other services and the fentanyl crisis. The White House also asked for \$12 billion for the Federal Emergency Management Agency to refill the coffers for disaster response.

(Continued on page 3)

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With the fiscal year ending on September 30 and the House and Senate significantly divided on how to fund the government in fiscal 2024, the Office of Management and Budget said the emergency funding was necessary to carry over certain operations during any period where a stopgap spending bill is in effect. Some of the emergency spending would go toward efforts to boost the federal workforce. The Justice Department would receive \$59 million to hire more immigration judges and support staff. The departments of Agriculture and Interior would receive a collective \$60 million to ensure adequate funding to support recent pay increases for federal firefighters.

Source: Government Executive, August 10, 2023

Union Dues

Rep. Eric Burlison (R-MO) has introduced The Paycheck Protection Act ([H.R. 4971](#)) that would bar federal agencies and the U.S. Postal Service from automatically deducting union dues from employees' pay checks. For decades, federal employees who join a union have been able to have their dues deducted directly from their paychecks, similarly to how employees' portion of health care premiums and retirement contributions are collected. The measure is cosponsored by Reps. Mary Miller (R-IL), Bob Good (R-VA), Andrew Ogles (R-TN), Nancy Mace (R-SC), Harriet Hageman (R-WY), Thomas Tiffany and Glenn Grothman, both (R-WI). Federal employee unions blasted the proposal, arguing that making it harder for federal workers to pay their union dues is designed to interfere with their decision to join a labor organization, which is already voluntary.

Source: Government Executive, August 17, 2023

Alleviating Federal Pay Compression

Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.) on August 8 introduced The Pay Compression Relief Act ([H.R. 5171](#)), which would effectively allow senior federal employees to receive annual increases to both basic and locality pay, even if they have already hit the federal pay cap. The legislation, which was cosponsored by Reps. Gerry Connolly (D-VA), Glenn Ivey, Jamie Raskin and David Trone, all (D-MD), is aimed at alleviating the impact of federal pay compression on some senior federal employees in cities with high costs of living. Pay compression refers to when a federal worker, typically in the Senior Executive Service or the upper echelons of the General

Schedule, is paid at or near the federal pay cap, meaning that when the president or Congress implements the annual federal pay raise each January, they miss out on some or all of the portion of the pay raise that goes toward increases in locality pay. The phenomenon is particularly prevalent in cities with high costs of living, like Washington, D.C., New York and San Francisco. President Joe Biden's fiscal year 2024 budget proposal alludes to the fact that the administration plans to put forward its own plan to fix pay compression.

Source: Government Executive, August 9, 2023

Hiring Freeze at the Education Department

On August 8, Rep. Aaron Bean (R-FL) introduced The Fostering Resource Efficiency in Education by Zero Employment (FREEZE) Act ([H.R. 5095](#)), which would immediately prevent Education from hiring any new employees or creating any new position. All funding for the department that was no longer necessary due to the attrition that would occur would be permanently rescinded. The measure does not set a sunset provision to end the freeze. "It's past time to get the feds out of the classroom and stop the ever-increasing bureaucracy at the Department of Education," Bean said. "Imposing a hiring freeze at the department is just the first step to decrease the role of the federal government and return education policy to where it belongs—the state and local level." Former President Trump, former Vice President Mike Pence and Gov. Ron DeSantis are among the Republican presidential candidates who have pledged to eliminate the Education Department if elected. The Education Department is the smallest Cabinet-level department, with just 4,100 employees.

Source: Government Executive, August 11, 2023

The House recessed on July 27 and will resume session on September 12; the Senate was scheduled to be in recess beginning July 31 and reconvening on September 5.

2023 VIRGINIA GENERAL ELECTION

In 2023, Virginia will be holding elections to fill all seats in the Virginia General Assembly, i.e., the House of Delegates and the Senate. The deadline to register to vote or update an existing registration is October 16, 2023. Early Voting for the 2023 November General Election will open on Friday, September 22, and run through Saturday, November 4. Any voter registered in Prince William County can vote at any Early Voting location in the county. Early Voting locations will be open on weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and weekend hours will be from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday, October 22, Saturday, October 28, and Saturday, November 4.

Vote early at the following locations from September 22 - November 4:

- Office of Elections – 9250 Lee Ave., Suite 1, Manassas
- DMV, Woodbridge Elections Office – 2731 Caton Hill Road, Woodbridge
- Haymarket-Gainesville Library – 14870 Lightner Road, Gainesville

From October 24 - November 4:

- Brentsville Courthouse Historic District – 12229 Bristow Road, Bristow
- Dumfries Community Center – 17755 Main St., Dumfries

In-Person voting requires valid identification from the Acceptable IDs List, which includes options of more than a dozen forms of identification ranging from a U.S. passport to a current utility bill. Acceptable forms of identification can be used for both Early Voting and on Election Day.

Drop boxes are also available at all Early Voting sites during Early Voting hours for those who wish to return a mailed ballot.

People who wish to vote by mail can:

- Apply online through the Virginia Department of Elections with state-issued identification.
- Download and print the application to mail, email, fax or drop off to the Prince William County Office of Elections.
- Pick up an application at the Prince William Office of Elections at 9250 Lee Ave. in Manassas or at any Prince William County library, and mail, email, fax or bring the application back to the county's Office of Elections.

Mail-in ballots must be postmarked by Election Day, which is November 7, 2023, and received via USPS or certified mail carrier at the Office of Elections by noon on Monday, November 13, 2023. Hand-delivered ballots, dropped at the Elections Office or any Polling Place, must be received by 7 p.m. on Election Day. Ballots may also be returned to drop boxes located at any Early Voting location within the Early Voting period. Visit <https://www.pwcvotes.org/votebymail>, or contact the Absentee Voting Team at absenteevoting@pwcgov.org for more information on Voting Early and by Mail.

Vote on Election Day: Voting hours are from 6 a.m.-7 p.m. on Election Day, November 7. Find your Polling Place from the [Polling Place List](#) to know where you go to vote.

For more information about elections, visit [pwcvotes.org](https://www.pwcvotes.org).

***The above information relates to voting in Prince William County. Chapter members living in the cities of Manassas and Manassas Park should contact their respective election offices at https://www.manassasva.gov/voter_registration_and_elections/ or at https://www.manassasparkva.gov/departments/registrar_of_voters/index.php.

NARFE WEBINARS

Upcoming NARFE Webinars:

Take Charge of Your Thrift Savings Plan Account

Wednesday, September 20 | 2 p.m. ET

For many feds, the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) represents the single largest liquid asset they'll have to support them during retirement. While TSP participants control their accounts, they also assume all risk and responsibility for the ultimate outcome. In this webinar, Mark Keen, CFP, will discuss key investment principals, the TSP's investment options, and strategies to help participants make the most of their TSP accounts.

Armed with an understanding of the fundamentals, retired TSP participants will be in a better position to implement a strategy that successfully aligns their personal goals and objectives. This webinar will cover:

- TSP contribution rules
- How to avoid missing out on agency matching contributions
- How the SECURE Act 2.0 affects catch-up contributions
- How to choose which funds to invest in
- Creating a diversified portfolio to balance risk and reward
- How rebalancing keeps you on track
- Mutual fund window – opportunity or trap?
- Accessing your TSP in retirement
- Understanding how TSP withdrawals are taxed
- Planning for required minimum distributions to avoid unnecessary taxes

Planning for the unexpected – designating beneficiaries to ensure a smooth transfer and power of attorney procedures

[REGISTER NOW](#)

Recent NARFE Webinars:

Thrift Savings Plan: Should You Stay or Should You Go?

Thursday, August 31

In this NARFE Federal Benefits Institute webinar, Mark Keen will help you better understand your options. He'll detail the benefits and drawbacks of the TSP system while highlighting other investment options and opportunities, allowing you to make an informed decision on what savings plan will best suit you.

This webinar will address the following questions and topics:

- Why a retiree younger than 59½ should stay with the TSP
- The pros and cons of moving your money to an IRA as a retiree
- Investment options
- Withdrawal options
- Tax implications
- What to look out for/avoid when moving money out of the TSP
- The best way to transfer money from the TSP to an IRA
- How to choose an IRA custodian
- TSP withdrawals versus IRA withdrawals
- Process
- Spousal consent
- Timing
- How to utilize Qualified Charitable Distributions
- Whether a surviving spouse should maintain a TSP Beneficiary Participant account

[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, August 16th

Chapter 356 held its regular monthly meeting, with 12 members and guests present. Guest speaker, Deborah Campbell, Communications Analyst, Prince William County Solid Waste Division, spoke on proper waste management and recycling in Prince William County.

Ms. Campbell indicated that there were three principles to solid waste management: reduce, reuse, and recycle. In 2020, the latest year for which the county has statistics, county residents were recycling 38.5% of waste and that number was expected to rise with the addition of yard waste in October 2021. Yard waste is collected March through December and includes leaves, plants, flowers, grass clippings, shrub, tree and yard trimmings. It must be separated in paper yard waste bags or containers marked for yard waste and put out separately from other recycling materials; yard waste is picked up once a week. The following additional materials should be recycled: cardboard; mixed paper, including newspaper, magazines, and junk mail; aluminum and steel cans; and plastic bottles, jars and jugs (marked numbers 1 or 2 on the bottom). The plastic tops on soda and water bottles can be recycled. Plastic milk bottles are no longer recyclable. Items such as yogurt or fruit containers cannot be recycled and should be put with regular trash. Five years ago, the county stopped collecting glass with other recyclables since it was devaluing other materials, i.e., broken glass was sticking to paper materials making them unusable. Glass can be taken to special "purple" bins, which are located in the landfill and Balls Ford Road Compost Facility, as well as several other locations throughout the county. If residents cannot bring glass to a bin for recycling, they should just put it in with their regular trash. Items to be recycled should be rinsed and put in receptacles loose, not in plastic bags, which the county does not recycle. Items such as used oil, household batteries and household hazard waste, paint cans and certain electronic equipment can be taken to the county landfill, which is located at

14811 Dumfries Road, Manassas, in quantities of up to 15 pounds or 40 gallons. The landfill is open only to residents of Prince William County. Residents in the cities of Manassas and Manassas Park may use the facility for a fee. Electronics can also be taken to stores such as Best Buy, although they may charge for recycling. The landfill has been built in such a way as to protect the environment. When trash is broken down, it turns to ash, which is in turn converted into electricity that is sold to NOVEC and some is eventually converted to renewable natural gas. More information can be found at www.pwc.va.gov/trashandrecycling.

A short business meeting was conducted after the presentation, with officers and committee reports. The Minutes of the July 19 chapter meeting, as reported in the Newsletter, were approved and the Treasurer's report was accepted. To date, the chapter has donated \$546 to the Alzheimer's Fund. Membership Chair Helen Brooks reported that the current chapter membership stands at 124 and that the chapter has lost eight members so far this year, while gaining several new members. Interim President Brandt referred members to the Newsletter for information on national legislation. The next regular monthly meeting for Chapter 356 is scheduled for September 20 at Bob Evans. The next Executive Committee meeting will be held via Zoom at 1:00 on September 5, the first Tuesday of the month; all members are welcome to attend the committee meeting and any member wishing to do so should contact one of the chapter officers to obtain the Zoom link. The raffle for the NARFE Alzheimer's Research Fund netted \$59.

Mary M. Brandt,
Secretary

Alzheimer's Corner
Marilyn Markman, RN

Last month I mentioned an article about how a hobby (pursuit) might provide an important defense against dementia. Did anyone put their "thinking caps" on (remember that from elementary school) and decide or start a new pursuit? Or, maybe you said why do I need to add something more to my days? Well, let me tell you what I learned from the article.

The article mentions muscle - how we can see our muscles getting softer - I won't mention stomach, thigh or arms. We can also see the health of our bones with a bone density scan. But what about our brains? Doctors recently became aware that this also happens to the brain. The Alzheimer's Association says we need to "stump" ourselves by challenging our brains - think of it as cognitive weightlifting, a task that requires mental flexing and strength - often that means doing something new.

Let's bring back Hobby...a hobby is an activity or interest pursued (there is that word again) for pleasure or relaxation and not as a main occupation. Monica Moreno, senior director of care and support at the Alzheimer's Association says, "Research indicates that mentally challenging activities can have short and long term benefits for the brain and a hobby is an excellent way to challenge oneself and possibly set off a cascade of positive changes."

Sylvain Moreno (no relation to Monica), an associate professor at the School of Interactive Arts and Technology at Simon Fraser University agrees. "Remaining mentally agile is so important it might carry more weight in protecting you from dementia than your genetics or your current cognitive skills. You are never too old to improve cognitive function."

So, have the two Moreno's given you more to think about regarding a new hobby?

While you are thinking, you might like to join us for the VA-Tri Counties Walk to End Alzheimer's. Every year the walk begins at the Harris Pavilion in Manassas. This year's date is October 21, 2023. Registration begins at 8:30am. The opening ceremony is at 9:30am, followed by the walk. We meet at the Pavilion arch and hope y'all can join us...be ready for a lot of energy to fight this awful disease.

If this is your first time, don't forget to get a Promise Garden Flower (pinwheel). The colors of the flowers have a lot of meaning:

- Blue - for those living with Alzheimer's
- Purple - for those who have lost someone to Alzheimer's
- Yellow - for caregivers
- Orange - for supporters of the cause

And always remember how important your contribution is to Alzheimer's Research through NARFE.

Chapter 356 Membership Report for August 2023

- 1 new member
- 2 dropped for nonrenewal

Welcome to our Chapter
 Cheri Swanstrom

Chapter 356 membership as of August 31 is 124 members.

Email Address Changes

Notify NARFE or our chapter whenever you change your email address to continue to receive this newsletter.

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 Program Comm.	Vacant	
Service Officer	Vacant	
Sunshine Comm.	Priscilla Saboe	703-361-1150
Alzheimer's Comm.	Priscilla Saboe	703-361-1150
Chapter Chaplain	Marilyn Markman, RN	703-791-4329
Newsletter Editor	Vacant	
	Richard Horte	703-368-8767

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.