

National Active & Retired Federal Employees Association

President's Message

By Pat Meyers

I hope all of you are enjoying the lovely fall weather. It was great to see so many of you at our September meeting. We had a record attendance of 21 members to hear an excellent presentation by Wendy Zenker, Executive Director of the Arlington Neighborhood Village, on its success in helping seniors stay in their homes. She also presented us with opportunities to volunteer, i.e. neighbors helping neighbors. It was also great to see some new faces and to reconnect with one another after our summer off.

Please join us for our October 11th meeting that will feature Steve Cone, Chief of Philanthropy, Marketing and Communications for Capital Caring Health in Northern Virginia. Capital Caring Health operates the only two In-Patient Hospice Centers in our area, one in Northern Virginia and one in Washington D.C. It also has the largest Children's Hospice Center on the East Coast and is one of five nationwide with a dedicated pediatric medical team. However, Capital Caring's programs and services have greatly expanded, and Steve will update us on these programs, especially their latest project on improving the lives of dementia sufferers using Robotic Companion Pets. **The meeting is scheduled for 12:15 p.m. (social) with program to follow at 12:45 p.m. in the Beech Room, Lubber Run Community Center, 300 N. Park Drive, Arlington, VA 22203.** Hope to see you there.

A big thank you to Mileva Hartman for serving as one of our delegates to the Arlington County Civic Federation (ACCF) for many years. Mileva has to step down and we're looking for a member to replace her. Chapter 7 is entitled to 4 delegates and 4 alternates. Ed Weiler and I are currently delegates, and we would love to have another member or two join us. It's a great way to learn about Arlington and the issues important to its residents. Meetings are held once a month from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month except for the summer months when ACCF does not meet. Meetings are both virtual via Zoom and in-person at the John T. Hazel auditorium at the Virginia Hospital Center - your choice. I usually Zoom. Since we have to recertify with ACCF in early November, please let me know of your interest by the end of October. Why not try it for a year? Let me know if you have any questions.

Last, but certainly not least, please plan to vote in local and state elections this fall. Early voting has begun in Virginia, so we have many opportunities to have our voices heard. See you in October!

Election of Chapter Officers for 2024

Terms of office for the currently elected Executive Board expire at the end of December 2023. Members willing to be nominated for the following elected officer positions for 2024 should contact Nancy Palmerino (703-243-6546) or at nancyolive0110@yahoo NOT LATER THAN 1 November 2023: (1) President; (2) 1st VP for Legislation; (3) 2nd VP for Membership; (4) Secretary; and (5) Treasurer. Questions regarding these offices may be directed to Nancy or President Pat (703-578-3372) or at pmmeyers2000@aol.com. Officers will be elected at the November general meeting. *(continued on p. 2)*

All nominations submitted in advance to Nancy, plus any nominations from the floor during that meeting, will be voted upon by those in attendance at the meeting. Please consider joining the Executive Board next year. As Legislative Chair, Ed Weiler, put it previously: "Running a chapter requires people. If enough members step up to the plate, Chapter 7 remains a going concern."

Legislative Corner

By Ed Weiler

Looking Beyond the Current Budget Imbroglio on Capitol Hill

By the time you read this, we will be either in the midst of a Federal Government shutdown, or at the beginning of what might turn out to be a string of continuing resolutions (CRs), as Congress struggles to come to agreement over FY24 funding. Then what? While anything is possible in the free-for-all that reigns on Capitol Hill these days, here are three items worthy of your attention.

Ending Government Shutdowns

Back in September, Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA-8) introduced a bill (*HR 5353*) that would initiate an automatic CR on October 1st, should appropriations bills not have passed by that date. This bill (as well as a companion Senate bill---*S.2041*, introduced by Sen. Kaine, D-VA) would also prohibit the Senate from moving forward with any other legislation (except in an emergency) until Congress might reach a deal on a long-term spending bill. Significantly, three other similar bills---all sponsored by Republicans---were introduced in the Senate earlier this year. Thus, at least in the Senate, there would appear to be bipartisan support for ending the use of shutdowns as a weapon in the chronic budget wars.

Establishment of a Bipartisan Fiscal Commission

Also back in September (9/18), the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget (CRFB, a widely-respected non-profit research firm frequently cited by both the news media and academia on Federal budgetary matters) wrote to Speaker McCarthy and Leader Jeffries in the House, and to Leaders McConnell and Schumer in the Senate, requesting that a bipartisan fiscal commission be established to address the Nation's many fiscal and economic challenges. Further, any such commission should, "...put all parts of the budget and tax code on the table."

As you might recall, we've been here before. Back in 2010 during the first Obama Administration, the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform (aka, Bowles-Simpson Commission) produced a wide-ranging report (dubbed, "The Moment of Truth"), that recommended a variety of new taxes and cuts to entitlement programs. In addition, benefits for Federal workers and retirees were also targeted for significant cuts, causing NARFE to mount a sustained campaign in opposition. NARFE members need to stay alert in the coming year for any similar efforts to unfairly reduce or eliminate our benefits.

More of the Same---i.e., Continuing Political Deadlock

As posited by *Wall Street Journal* reporter, Richard Rubin, the reigning political dynamic is such that: "...both parties agree that Social Security and Medicare, the two biggest Federal spending programs must not be touched, [and] they also agree that income taxes on the overwhelming majority of Americans can go down but never up. That tacit, politically popular consensus keeps tax revenue as a share of the economy flat or declining while spending's share rises. (continued on p. 3)

It also locks in a permanent budget imbalance that both parties bemoan but neither seems eager to change.” (Tax Cuts Are Here to Stay---and So Are Budget Deficits,” *WSJ*, 9/14/23, p. A-1).

What *should* we make of this chronic budgetary sound and fury on the Hill? On the one hand, it would be tempting to conclude, along the lines suggested by Rubin, that the status quo, stormy though it might be, will prevail indefinitely. On the other, there are those who predict that our fiscal situation is so dire that it simply cannot be ignored. In a recent editorial, the *Washington Post* (9/10/23, p. A-24) --- a voice not usually associated with worries about fiscal rectitude---thundered mightily as follows: “This [referring to a severe mismatch between expenditures and revenue collection] can’t go on unchecked. Federal debt is on track to hit a record level by 2029, meaning it will be higher as a percentage of the U.S. economy than even World War II’s peak. And it will get uglier from there if politicians continue to ignore it.”

At the end of the day, however, it is not our job as NARFE members to resolve the Nation’s fiscal morass. But it *is* our responsibility to ensure that if/when Congress comes to grips with the problem that any resulting budget cuts are not taken disproportionately out of our hide. Going forward, you should check in daily with the “Advocacy” page at www.NARFE.org, and when requested, take action.

Alzheimer’s Report

By Pat Meyers

DID YOU KNOW:

1. - we collected \$210.05 for Alzheimer's research at our September meeting? This brings the total collected to-date for 2023 to \$656.40. Thank you everyone!

2.- the fall season is the time for the National Walk to Fight Alzheimer's Disease? The Manassas NARFE chapter 356 will participate in the VA Tri-Counties Walk to End Alzheimer's on October 21, 2023. It will take place at the Harris Pavilion, 9201 Center Street, Manassas, VA 20110. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. with the opening ceremony at 9:30 a.m. followed by the walk. If anyone is interested in joining the walk, please contact Pat Meyers for further details. There is no registration fee, although donations are welcome.

3. - that there is an official Alzheimer's on-line store that provides a variety of products to ease a person's discomfort, build a safer home environment and a sense of independence? Products are designed specifically for those with Alzheimer's, Dementia, stroke and other memory related conditions whether caring for a patient in a professional capacity or caring for a loved-one at home. Products include safety items, robotic companion pets, music therapy, home medical equipment, and much more. The store website is: <http://www.alzstore.com>. Their toll-free number is 1-800-752-3238. Check it out! It/s amazing!

Department of Defense (DOD) Civilian Retiree Cards No Longer Valid

Please note, as of August 31st, Department of Defense (DoD) Civilian Retiree Identification (ID) cards are invalid. Instead, to access morale, welfare and recreation activities at DoD installations, DoD retirees will need to enroll their REAL ID-compliant driver’s license for future use at an installation’s Visitor Control Center. Retirees will need to bring their Standard Form 50 with them to enroll. Access to the installation remains at the discretion of installation commanders. For more information, go to: <https://www.dcpas.osd.mil/policy/retirement/retirementidcard>.

Membership Report

By Nancy Palmerino

We welcome back Margaret Walters who has been reinstated. We currently have 280 Chapter members and an additional 438 National members in our chapter area for a total of 718 Chapter and National members.

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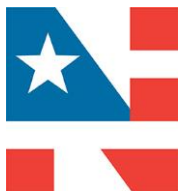
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