



**Virginia Federation
of NARFE (VFN)
Fall 2023 Newsletter**



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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

As this newsletter goes to press, we are gearing up for the busy holiday season with chapter parties and aggressively involved in preparation for the 2024 VFN Conference, which will be held in Harrisonburg, Virginia. I hope to see you there!

This newsletter covers the period from July 1 to October 31 with a few additional updates, including the fact that we have a new State legislation Chair. We welcome Deborah Brown who is also 1st Vice President and State Legislative Chair for Chapter 1697 Brentwood.

As I prepared this newsletter, I was amazed at the talent we have on this current board. There is a wealth of information included in this newsletter. I hope you will take the time to read it.

Kathy Arpa,

VFN Newsletter Editor

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FEDERATION PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It has been a very busy and productive few months since my installation as President in July. My goals center around Training, updating the VFN Handbook, developing a Strategic Plan, revitalizing Chapters, Membership recruitment, and promoting NARFE and the VFN to get more members involved. The purpose of the VFN is to support chapters and it is expected to provide information so that all chapters run successfully.

In August, I attended the Federation Presidents/National Executive Board (NEB) Meeting in Alexandria. It was highly informative, and I met many fellow Federation Presidents from all over the Nation. At that meeting, I became one of seven Federation Presidents in the FLAG (Federation Liaison Advisory Group) to act as advisors and make suggestions/recommendations/requests to the National President to present to the NEB.

In September I attended the Region X Conference in Frankfort, Kentucky, along with Doris McAdams, Ora McCoy, Mike Thurber, and Kathy and Mark Arpa. Each Federation President was invited to share their Federation Report, resulting in an excellent opportunity to share ideas and experiences.

Anthem BCBS invited me to make a NARFE presentation in October to their Agency Benefit Officers Virtual Seminar, which was well received. Hopefully, it will help us get our information to Active and Retiring Federal employees. A Membership Drive was also held at the Anthem BCBS Health Fair at Vinton War Memorial in October.

During this time period, I attended weekly Electronic Communications meetings, State Legislative Meetings, Conference Committee meetings, monthly Program Chairs meetings, Training Committee meetings, Region X meetings, and FLAG meetings.

Since becoming President, I have visited Richmond Chapter 60, Petersburg Chapter 28, and Fredericksburg Chapter 90, as well as four potential sites for our April 7-10, 2024 VFN Conference. Plans are to visit more Chapters in the upcoming year.

Our Fall VFN Board Meeting was held in Fredericksburg in October, where our new Parliamentarian Beatrice Squire was introduced, and we took a vote to match Headquarters' \$10 Membership Incentive. Hotel Madison/Shenandoah Valley Conference Center at 710 S. Main Street in Harrisonburg was selected for our April 7 – 10 Conference. Hotel Rooms will be \$107 plus tax and the registration fee will include a reception, two lunches, breaks, and a banquet. Senator Kaine and Congressman Cline have accepted invitations to speak, schedules permitting. Many exciting and interesting workshops are anticipated in addition to the training. Be sure to mark April 7 – 10 on your calendar for attendance at the VFN Conference. Details at VANARFE.org.

To date, Training has been conducted on “The Role of the Service Officer” by former VFN Service Officer Arlene Arthur, “Parliamentary Procedure” by VFN Parliamentarian Beatrice Squire, and “What is the VFN” by yours truly. The VFN Handbook is in the process of being updated by Jim Little, and Membership Recruitment continues through multiple Membership Drives as well as individual contact with prospective and lapsed members. The Strategic Planning Committee is in place and meeting to develop a comprehensive VFN Strategic Plan. My goal is to continue moving the Virginia Federation of NARFE in the direction for success, and “Together We Will Succeed.”

Thank you for your NARFE membership and thank you for your support. I look forward to working with each of you to make the Virginia Federation of NARFE the best that WE can be!

Wishing you Happy Holidays!

Frances E. Boatman

President

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FIRST VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Well, it has been a heck of a fall for me. Actually, a heck of a year, counting last March. I do not know how much more is going to happen. I was in a major accident on October 2nd returning from our conference site visit to the Madison Hotel and Shenandoah Valley Conference Center. Eight and a half miles from home, I ran into the back of a tractor trailer at 60 miles an hour, and the outcome was not as bad as it could have been, believe it or not, because I am still here. Ten broken ribs, and a broken sternum and numerous other injuries. Enough about me.

I want to say thank you to the Area Vice Presidents for their continued support and working with their chapters.

As far as the conference, the site selection committee looked at five sites, and I visited two other sites. The Board voted at the October Board Meeting and the site for the April 7-10, 2024 VANARFE Conference is going to be the Madison Hotel and Shenandoah Valley Conference Center in Harrisonburg, Virginia. It is located on the James Madison University Campus. We still need ideas for workshops and training classes. Also, we are looking for interesting events for individuals to partake in while in the area. We are still in need of greeters, and registration personnel for the conference. We are busy getting Bulletin One ready to be sent out. We are looking forward to a great conference.

I attended the Harvest Dinner in Colonial Beach with Chapter 595. I want to thank Leslie Ravenell and the members for their wonderful hospitality. Great meal, and great fellowship.

Again, I have been out of commission trying to heal from my accident. I thank everyone for your prayers, and cards. It means so much. I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas, and the Happiest of New Years. I hope to see you at our 2024 Conference in Harrisonburg in April.

Larry McIlwee

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT



After assuming duties as Virginia Federation 2nd Vice President in July, I continued the monthly Program Chairs Zoom Meetings which is a fantastic opportunity to share ideas, successes and challenges. The biggest challenge has been the vacant positions of Service Officer, State Legislation Chair, and

Membership Chair. Right now, President Boatman is doing double duty as Acting Membership Chair and Secretary Deborah Fisk is also doing the state legislative program. A big thank you to Jim Little for temporarily assuming the duties of National Legislative Chair during Gaston Gianni's health challenge. Immediate Past Service Officer Arlene Arthur conducted a Zoom training program, but the position remains vacant. We really need to fill this position as soon as possible, so please consider this and/or other vacant positions.

Plans are underway for the VFN Conference and Annual Meeting in April 2024 in Harrisonburg and I am serving as Secretary and participating in planning and the weekly Zoom meetings.

I remain active in Dulles Chapter as Secretary, Program Chair, and Lunch Coordinator.

Patricia Wolfe

SECRETARY'S REPORT



The past six months have been a busy and eventful time for the Association. Significant changes within the organization have begun. In June, officers were elected and the first board of directors meeting was held in July, followed by the second meeting in October. Chosen to lead the organization in the 2023-2024 fiscal year is Frances E. Boatman, President; Larry McIlwee, 1st Vice President; Patricia Wolfe, 2nd Vice President; and Deborah O. Fisk, Secretary. Per the Virginia Federation of NARFE Bylaws, Thomas Rachele, first selected in 2020 and elected in 2021 has currently agreed to remain Treasurer for the immediate future.

Officers were installed by National President Bill Shackelford at the July 2023 VFN Board Meeting. >>>



Outgoing President Robert Martin passing the gavel to Incoming President Frances Boatman.

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With the election mentioned above completed, it is time to begin again. The Nominating Committee is entertaining a list of names of any member who are inclined to run for office: President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

The important dates are as follows:

Anyone who would like to declare to run – Tuesday, January 9, 2024

Report of Nominees to President – Thursday, February 8, 2024

Annual Member Meeting – Monday, April 8, 2024

Any contested offices, balloting to take place between Monday, April 8 and Friday, June 7, 2024

The Bylaw amendments passed in April-June 2023 were executed and forwarded to NARFE Headquarters in July. They were approved on August 21, 2023, returned to the Secretary and a copy is filed on the vanarfe.org website (<https://vanarfe.org/legal/>). Jim Little, Chapter 1270 Woodbridge, is currently reviewing the VFN Handbook. The current Handbook can also be found on the page referenced above. If you have questions or concerns, please refer them to your Area Vice President.

Minutes for the July and October board meetings can be found on the website as well. The July minutes have been approved and the copy of the October minutes remains in draft mode until the January meeting. We are excited to have added Beatrice Squire to the Board in the role of Parliamentarian. Ms. Squire is a member of the Virginia State Association of Parliamentarians and served as President for several years. Under her tutelage we look forward to a more organized and efficient Board of Directors.

Membership is everyone's responsibility. It is important that everyone gets the tools they need to tell NARFE's story! NARFE provides expert guidance on federal benefits issues directly affecting current and former federal employees, as well as tips and tools to help ensure a safe and secure retirement for the federal community. Please refer to the www.narfe.org website for a myriad of tips, tricks, certificates, and other useful information.

Milestone anniversaries are an opportunity for our members to reconnect and celebrate our heritage and growth.

The Virginia Federation of NARFE (VANARFE) is happy to announce anniversaries of the following chapters during the period of July to December 2023:



Area I

Chapter 682 (Newport News/Peninsula) – 65 years

July 1958

President – Michael Thurber

Chapter 685 (Williamsburg) – 65 years

August 1958

President – Hazel Braxton

Area Vice President – Marilyn Riddle

Area IV

Chapter 1293 (Churchland/Portsmouth) – 60 years

July 1973

President – Graylin Taylor

Area Vice President – Graylin Taylor

Area IX

Chapter 356 (Manassas) - 70 years – December 1953

President – Mary Brandt

Chapter 893 (Springfield) – 60 years - December 1963

President – Marcy Stennes

Area Vice President – John Bankson

Deborah O. Fisk

TREASURER'S REPORT



VA Federation of NARFE Fund Balances FY 2023

Account	10/31/2023 Balance	APPROVED BUDGET 07/01/23 to 06/30/24	06/30/2024 Balance*
Bank Accounts			
1 InFirst Checking #5783	\$ 38,242	\$ 44,732	\$ (6,490)
1 InFirst Savings #5783	\$ 100,067	\$ 100,054	\$ 12
RESERVE FUNDS	\$ -	\$ (79,164)	\$ 79,164
TOTAL Bank Accounts	<u>\$ 138,308</u>	<u>\$ 65,622</u>	<u>\$ 72,687</u>

*Projected

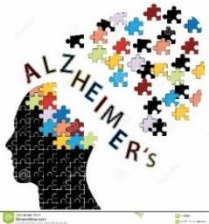
VA Federation of NARFE Source and Use of Funds

SOURCE OF FUNDS	07/01/2023- 10/31/2023	APPROVED BUDGET 07/01/23 to 06/30/24	BUDGET VARIANCE
** FY 2024 Projection			
1 NARFE HQ 10% Funds	\$ 13,506	\$ 40,500	\$ (26,994)
2 Chapter Dues	511	8,300	(7,789)
3 Conference Revenue	-	17,350	(17,350)
5 Other Revenue	-	100	(100)
6 Interest Revenue	24	100	(76)
TOTAL SOURCE OF FUNDS	<u>\$ 14,041</u>	<u>\$ 66,350</u>	<u>\$ (52,309)</u>

USE OF FUNDS

TOTAL A EXECUTIVE USE OF FUNDS	\$ 11,025	\$ 60,615	\$ (49,590)
TOTAL B LEGISLATIVE USE OF FUNDS	672	12,916	(12,244)
TOTAL C PROGRAM OPERATIONS USE OF FUNDS	562	11,591	(11,029)
TOTAL D FIELD OPERATIONS USE OF FUNDS	4,542	29,054	(24,512)
TOTAL F APPOINTEES USE OF FUNDS	6,471	7,163	(692)
TOTAL H CONFERENCE USE OF FUNDS	-	24,175	(24,175)
TOTAL USE OF FUNDS OUTFLOWS	<u>\$ 23,272</u>	<u>\$ 145,514</u>	<u>\$ (122,242)</u>
2022/23 FY OPERATING DEFICIT	<u>\$ (9,232)</u>	<u>\$ (79,164)</u>	<u>\$ 69,932</u>
Reserve Funds Usage	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 79,164</u>	<u>\$ 79,164</u>
BALANCED BUDGET	<u>\$ (9,232)</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ (9,232)</u>

Thomas Rachele



REPORTS FROM PROGRAM CHAIRS

ALZHEIMER'S REPORT

How Antioxidants Play a Role in Alzheimer's Disease

Multiple studies have also found that those who adhere to [MIND](#) (Mediterranean Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay)—which emphasizes the consumption of antioxidant-rich fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, and fish, with very little meat, dairy, and sweets—had a lower risk of developing Alzheimer's disease, better cognitive function prior to death, and fewer signs of Alzheimer's disease than those who did develop the condition. That is according to new research published in the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* by Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine professor C. Kathleen Dorey and a team of researchers.

Scientists analyzed the brains of 31 donors, the average age of which was 75 years. Most, but not all, had died with Alzheimer's disease. Compared with unaffected brains, they found that brains of those with the disease had around half the level of certain micronutrients—vitamins and minerals critical to the body's function but needed in only small amounts.

"This study, for the first time, demonstrates deficits in important dietary antioxidants in Alzheimer's brains," Dorey said in a news release about the study. Those who are concerned they or a loved one might have Alzheimer's, or another form of dementia should talk to their doctor, who may recommend they see another specialist, like a neuropsychologist or a neurologist.

I look forward to seeing you at the Alzheimer's Research Silent Auction at the 2024 VFN Conference in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Stop by and see me.

Donna Shackelford



Membership is the key to any effective organization, as there is strength in numbers. NARFE had 500,000 members in the 1980s, but that number has steadily declined to 135,000 members in 2023. NARFE is the only organization dedicated solely to protecting and preserving the benefits of all federal workers and retirees. NARFE delivers valuable guidance, timely resources and powerful advocacy and has continued to do so for more than 100 years. It is imperative that we recruit and retain members so our voices will continue to be heard.

Membership Gain/Loss Reports are compiled and posted on the VFN Membership web page and sent to Area Vice Presidents (AVPs) and Membership Chairs with recommendations to contact prospective new members and non-renewals. As of October 31st there were 4,396 Chapter members and 6,140 National members - a total of 10,536 VFN members. Updates are given at monthly Program Chairs meetings and quarterly VFN Board meetings.

Membership Outreach – In July, I attended the Richmond Chapter 60 meeting to help revitalize the chapter. In September I attended their Zoom meeting and in October I attended their meeting with Blue Cross/Blue Shield speaker. Also, in July, the Petersburg Chapter 28 invited me to their Membership/Planning meeting. Membership kits were handed out for members to share with prospective members. Plans are to visit other Chapters and assist with Membership Planning and Recruitment. Let me know how I can be of assistance to you and your Chapter.

Membership Recruitment - Roanoke Valley Chapter 111 set up a Membership Display Table at the Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield Health Fair at the Vinton War Memorial in October, resulting in 20 new prospective members. Brentwood Chapter 1697 set up Membership Display Tables at the Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield Health Fair and at the FBI Health Fair, resulting in a total of 70 new prospective members. Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield invited me to speak on NARFE and its benefits at their October Agency Benefit Officer Seminar. Hopefully, the HR representatives will inform active and retiring employees about NARFE.



A Membership Display Table was held at Congressman Connolly's Health Fair in November. Pictured left to right – Jim Little, Mary Lou Vroman, Doris McAdams, Pat Myers, and Ted Pasek.

2023 Membership Drive continues through December 31. Recruiters are awarded \$10 by Headquarters for each new member they recruit. The VFN Board voted to match the \$10 and the VFN incentive will be distributed at the VFN Conference at Hotel Madison in Harrisonburg April 7 – 10, 2024. Be sure to add your membership ID number to the new member application. (Your ID number is on your

NARFE magazine mailing label.) Please participate in this important effort.

Remember, membership is everyone's responsibility. If you have suggestions or would like help with membership, please let me know. Also, we are searching for a Federation Membership Chair. If you are interested in learning more about the position, please contact me at feboatman@live.com

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Frances E. Boatman
VFN Membership Chair (Acting)

"Together We Will Succeed"



PUBLIC RELATIONS REPORT

We are delighted to announce that the 2024 Annual VFN Conference will be held April 7 – 10, 2024 at the Hotel Madison and Conference Center (pictured here) in Harrisonburg, Virginia. It checks all the boxes for

our attendees with lovely meeting and sleeping rooms with refrigerators, a restaurant, complimentary parking, and it is reasonably priced at \$107 per night plus tax. Bulletin No. 1 will be out shortly so we hope you will share it with your chapter members early in January and plan to attend our Conference. While this Conference is our 70th Annual Meeting, Conference Coordinator Larry McIlwee and Conference Chair Melissa Groppe are working on new and exciting presentations, workshops, and events. In addition to hearing from NARFE leaders, state and national legislators have been invited as well as other inspiring speakers. Mr. McIlwee said, "I would welcome your ideas for workshops that are of special interest. Send to joseph.mcilwee@verizon.net."



The rest of July and August was slow for me as most chapters do not meet. In September, I attended the Region X Conference which was held in Frankfort, Kentucky. Robert Allen, (pictured here) our Region X Vice President, presided over the Conference. There were 47 attendees from the five federations in Region X. We had a full agenda with guest speakers on Zoom from NARFE Headquarters, including Bill Shackelford, NARFE National President, Johann DeCastro, Chief of Staff, Nora MacDonald, Director of Member Engagement, John Hatton, NARFE Staff Vice President, Policy and Programs and Jenn Rafael, NARFE Director of Communications and Marketing. Donna Shackelford, Region X Alzheimer's Coordinator also gave a zoom presentation. We had updates on advocacy, membership, communications. Other speakers included representatives from Blue Cross and Blue Shield, Aetna and. There was also a presentation about scams affecting seniors.



The conference included buffet breakfast every morning and a catered luncheon which provided many opportunities for networking with NARFE members in the five Federations in attendance. Of interest, most of the federation presidents had very nice power point slides to accompany their presentations. VFN President Boatman did not, however, as she gave her presentation the room became silent. They were shocked that Virginia had done so much. Personal observation, Virginia is the only federation setting goals and accomplishing them.



See you in Harrisonburg in April!

Attending from Virginia were Michael Thurber, Frances Boatman, Doris McAdams, Ora McCoy, Kathy and Mark Arpa (pictured here).

On the last day of the Conference, Kathy Arpa presented Robert Allen with a card to celebrate his 50th wedding anniversary. The card had been signed by all the attendees. He was quite pleased and surprised!



Please visit our Facebook page and share it with your friends.



[\(7\) NARFE - Virginia Federation | Spotsylvania VA | Facebook](#)

Doris McAdams

NATIONAL LEGISLATION REPORT

The National Legislation Committee continues to promote the goals of NARFE, especially the repeal of the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) (H.R.82 and S.597) and supporting full COLA's for Federal Retirees (H.R.866 and S.4221 [117th Congress]) with members of the 118th Congress.

All Senatorial Legislative Liaisons (SLLs) and Congressional District Liaisons (CDLs) positions are filled, although a couple of incumbents have indicated an interest in being replaced. We are pleased with the enthusiasm and aggressiveness of the team in reaching out and engaging our legislators.

During this reporting period our committee members continued to meet with their respective representatives and senators, communicated with them and their staffs via phone and/or email, and/or attended fund raisers and town hall meetings. In addition, several of the House representatives or their assistants attended chapter events. During the meetings and events, CDL's and SLL's provided updates and details of all of NARFE's Legislative priorities: Oppose Any Cuts to Earned Federal Retirement and Health Benefits, Support Reform or Repeal of the WEP and the GPO, Support for Full COLAs for Federal Retirees, Strengthen the Office of Personnel Management Retirement Services Division, Protection for Enrollees in the Federal Long Term Care Insurance

Program, Support Improved Integration of Medicare with the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, Support Market Rate Increases to Federal Pay Rates and Oppose Federal Employee Compensation Cuts, and Improving Government Operations and Protecting the Merit System. Especially noteworthy is that as of mid-November there are 298 cosponsors for H.R. 82 to repeal the WEP and GPO. This is a significant accomplishment in such a short period of time since the beginning of this Congress. In addition, the House Subcommittee on Social Security, Ways and Means, held a field hearing on November 20, 2023, to discuss the impact of WEP and GPO on the benefits of public servants. NARFE continues to encourage its members to communicate with their respective representatives to support the bill; a sample letter is on the NARFE Website. Also, on November 1 Senator Alex Padilla introduced The Equal COLA, (S. 3194), the companion bill to H.R. 866. This is great progress on two of NARFE's highest priorities.

During Calendar Year 2023, the VFN Political Action Committee has raised a total of \$500 through the date of this report, with \$150 raised during this reporting period.

Gaston Gianni and Jim Little
National Legislation Committee Co-Chairs

VIRGINIA STATE LEGISLATION REPORT

The State Legislation Team began work on the 2024 Legislative Plan in early May. The group decided to approach our important task a bit differently this year. We created a list of items that we thought would best serve the issues and struggles facing many retirees. We expanded our research to include facts, figures, and raw data. We felt like it was not enough to produce a "wish list." We needed to offer data which would make it much harder for any legislator that we approach to discount our "ASK" without seriously reviewing our list.

After several online meetings we reduced the list down to four major items and lead teams were developed to concentrate on specific areas.

- Exempting a Segment of CSRS Pensions Equivalent to Social Security Retirement
- No means test for \$12,000 65+ Age Deduction
- Family Caregiver Tax Credit
- Nursing Home Priorities

Lead teams worked on specific items, and we put our package together when their research papers were completed. Many hours were spent by the lead teams digging up every possible scenario they could on the specific areas we chose for our 2024 Plan. Many thanks to Christian Gieseler for his work on **CSRS Pensions**, Mary Ann Munley on **Means test for Age 65+**, and Margaret Keator for **Nursing Home Standards**. And I would be remiss if I did not mention Karl Beisel who constantly amazed us with facts, figures, and ideas. The research he has done over the years, which he generously offered the team, was extremely helpful.

Without the hours of research spent on our body of work we would not have been able to produce, not only an impressive marketing document, but white papers to forward to key legislators who, we hope, will evaluate, and present a bill or resolution for consideration by the General Assembly. White paper documents have been shared with Delegate Vivian Watts, Delegate Betsy Carr, and Senator Lamont Bagby on Virginia Tax Reform. Delegate Sam Rasoul remains our main contact on health and nursing home issues. As you know, ideas are formulated and as bills or resolutions are entered into record for consideration, we will be looking for co-sponsors. Bills are entered between November 20, 2023, and January 10, 2024. As we wait and watch to see if we can finally make the cut on improved Virginia Tax Code Amendments in this next session, we can continue to educate our members each time we meet. Every legislator we have approached agreed that the Virginia Tax Code needs work, this may be our year to be heard.

The traditional Virginia Federation of NARFE trifold marketing collateral was created and board approved. Distribution is in process. If you do not have copies of the trifold soon, please check with your Area Vice President. It is important that you have multiple copies. One for yourself and a couple to share. We need these reminder documents to be in the hands of every legislator. It is important that we are heard because our developmental plan is important.

Taxes are necessary and we certainly support fair taxation. However, there are facts to support an inadequacy levied toward CSRS retirees. The Income Tax Code in Virginia remains biased toward some. As far as Nursing Home Priorities, last year was the first time Virginia admitted that we need restrictions and regulations governing the way nursing homes are run. This was just a first step, there is still much to do.

We can do this together, but it will take everyone reaching out and speaking up. Look for distribution of the trifold, check on the VFN website (<https://vanarfe.org/state-legislation/>) where you will find a wealth of information, and get behind our plan by making legislator visits, texts, letters, and email. We are asking for fair taxation just as promised in several Supreme Court decisions and that our vulnerable adults receive the humane care expected for our elderly.

Let 2024 be the year that every member of the VFN works together to effect change. If we do not speak up, we can never expect change.

Deborah O. Fisk,

State Legislation Team Member

FIELD OPERATIONS

Area I

In my typical fashion, I would like to hold up my four area chapters for their outstanding efforts to keep a strong focus on the heart of NARFE and our federation, VFN —the chapters themselves. In fact, those in the national only structure do not have a comparable cheerleader at this point. In turn, the leadership in the four chapters and I contribute, in a significant manner, to the health of VFN. Without chapters, there would be a much smaller federation and national organization.

My efforts in the next period will concentrate on the status of attendance as well as membership at each chapter, whether it is increasing, no change, or decreasing. Obviously, only the last two categories need to be emphasized to produce a plan of action.

Chapter 682—Peninsula newsletters continue at practical intervals, regular meetings, good programs such as five candidates for General Assembly spoke, zoom capability by November is expected; \$1,500 raised for Peninsula Alzheimer's walk. Mike Thurber, president, was the only participant from Area I at the Region X Conference in Frankfort, KY, in September.

Chapter 685 – Williamsburg newsletters at announced intervals, pictures of members at monthly meetings in *The Virginia Gazette*, celebration of 65th anniversary, regular meetings, consistently good programs---four health insurance reps will be in attendance in November, two canines and their officer handlers presented a most unusual program in September, and they will participate in the Williamsburg Walk for Alzheimer's.

Chapter 1757—Middle Peninsula, Gloucester announcements of upcoming meetings in local newspaper, *The Gloucester-Mathews Gazette-Journal*, and in regular emails, member on Area I ECC to replace resignation, president is back at the helm after wife's death and enjoying fishing, the reason they moved to that area.

Chapter 1823 -- Northern Neck, Warsaw newsletters at regular intervals, plans finalized for Holiday Luncheon, one of the most popular events in Area I or even entire federation--invitations are highly prized, VFN 1st VP is back home after very serious car accident, chapter has rallied around him. Of course, it is to be noted that he was returning from an on-site conference committee site meeting when this occurred, thus typifying his dedication.

Recap of Area I's success in maintaining a majority of members in chapters and thus maintaining a higher membership in VFN.

Chapter 682 – 50%, Chapter 685 – 51%, Chapter 1757 – 63%, Chapter 1823 – 68%
Overall for Area I – 53% Overall for VFN – 42%

It is my goal to continue to push forward in all four chapters to emphasize the importance of chapter membership by noting that there is a close correlation between outstanding programs as well as tasty food and the increased social interaction during the process. Being aware of the unique nature of each chapter, three work best by always meeting at the same place, but the other needs to rotate because its area has a much larger footprint. Having elected our two members to serve on the VFN Nominating Committee at our caucus at the last convention means that they stand ready to serve on that most important body in the next few months. Mike Thurber, Chapter 682, is our main representative and Carol Brown, Chapter 1823, alternate, were chosen last April.

Marilyn Riddle

Area III

Chapter 28 - Petersburg had at its May meeting, a Nutritionist Speak on Senior Nutrition. It was well received. Our June meeting was our summer break meeting at Shoney's and the lunch was well attended. Petersburg Chapter 28 convened their first meeting since the summer break on September 19, 2022. Mr. Jim Kisicki of the Valentine Museum gave a presentation about the Women of Richmond. It was very well received by the membership. Approximately 10 members attended. A Blue Cross FEP representative presented at our October meeting. They gave a thorough briefing on BC/BS FEP changes for the November and December open season.

Chapter 2265 - Midlothian continues to struggle to find leadership candidates. They are actively pursuing candidates for President, 1st Vice President, and Secretary. In July, Frances Boatman was their guest speaker on membership. In August, Senator Tim Kaine joined their group for an interesting Q & A. In September, they hosted Gary Powers, Sr., the U2 Spy Pilot during the early 60's. These programs were well received. They felt good about attendance for their programs, although they still attract less than 10% of our membership who we hope can be reached by email. In October, the Chapter met with Kathy Bass (BC/BS) to discuss changes to BC/BS/FEP for 2024. They will have an Alzheimer's program in November and plan to have a Holiday Celebration in December.

Chapter 2065 – Louisa hosted Wynn Hasty, Area 3 VP, and subsequently Debbie Fisk, State Legislative Chair in May and June. Discussions were held on the Virginia Federation capabilities that Chapter members can participate in and the structure of NARFE HQ was also discussed. Debbie Fisk, the VA Acting State Legislative Chair, gave a thorough update on the 2022 State Legislative plan and other legislative issues. The Chapter adjourned for months of July and August 2022. In September and October, the Chapter discussed steps that could be taken by the officers to gauge member interest.

They surveyed members asking what they got out of Chapter meetings and what would be of interest to them to prompt better attendance.

Chapter 1727 – Richmond continues to remain small but vibrant. At the September meeting, members worked extremely hard to establish goals and programs. In October, Kathy Bass presented a program on BC/BS FEP changes for 2024. They met the new pastor for Welborne Methodist Church. She seemed quite nice and delighted that our group was meeting at Welborne. They have interesting programs scheduled for the New Year. They are planning a Christmas Dinner for the Chapter. This Chapter continues to meet and is doing well.

Chapter 60 – Richmond has not met due to concerns about COVID and the variances that exist.

Wynn Hasty

Area IV

The Churchland Chapter 1293 meeting was held on Wednesday September 6, 2023 at Dennis's Spaghetti and Steak House in Churchland. Meeting attendance is not good for this chapter. We had a chapter calling committee in May to call and speak with all members. For this chapter many have aged out. This is my assessment; we were more of a social group at large and a few officers handle the business end of the chapter. Then covid happened. I need to discuss Chapter 1293 issues in more detail with Mr. Larry McIlwee First Vice President and or Ms. Frances E. Boatman, President. I suggest that we (VFN) set up an operational group for Chapter 1293 from members from the other two chapters, that may become permanent, or consider closing and merging with Suffolk and Chesapeake chapters. We are not meeting now.

I was invited to attend the Suffolk Chapter 1743 Meeting by Mr. Horton on September 20th, at the Holiday Inn Express Hotel off of Godwin Blvd. Approximately 20 people were there. We had a nice breakfast. The speaker was the President of Sentara Obici Hospital.

The BlueCross and Blue Shield health fair on November 3rd at the Chesapeake Conference Center was a great affair again this year. There were many vendors and participants there. Ms. Station, president of Chapter 1697, received many applications to join NARFE. I was invited to attend the Brentwood chapter 1697 Holiday Party by Ms. Staton.

Graylin Taylor

Area VII

Among our six Area VII chapters, Roanoke Valley–111, Charlottesville/Albemarle–135, Harrisonburg-164, Winchester–180, Page Valley/Luray–1793, and Shenandoah County–2358, several are struggling with member retention and finding new members.

This summer and fall, I have been in phone contact with five of our six Area chapters (Roanoke Valley the exception), and attended meetings of the Winchester, Page Valley/Luray, and Charlottesville chapters, as well as my own Harrisonburg chapter’s meetings. All chapters report average monthly attendance of 10-25 members. The prevailing sentiment among all chapters is that “we are mighty but few” – with retained members weary with multiple chapter jobs. Those members regularly attending chapter meetings enjoy the social aspects very much but are engaging less and less (via their personal follow-up study and examination) with PAC and legislative concerns.

Primary among our VFN Board concerns is that Chapter 180 in Winchester submitted their resignation from the Virginia Federation (officially back-dated to 1 January 2023); they will remain National-only members. After further inquiry by me, as AVP VII, the Chapter Treasurer did confirm that they held a vote with their chapter members present regarding this motion, and the majority of those present ruled a firm no. The Treasurer reported that Chapter 180 believes that VFN membership has not been productive for, or helpful to, them so they no longer wish to pay the dues, however minor. They also reported that their membership dwindled during the pandemic to two hundred from a robust 600, with only an average of 25 members now attending meetings.

All Area VII chapters continue to advocate, and raise funds, for the National Alzheimer’s Association via their monthly 50/50 contributions. A recent stand-out is Page Valley/Luray–1793 that raised a record \$1,350 for research at their September picnic.

Examples of interesting, valuable, and informational presentations held by our six chapters include one about the health and status of the Shenandoah River (Winchester-180); several chapters held financial planning seminars (Charlottesville/Albemarle–135, Harrisonburg-164, Page Valley/Luray–1793). Charlottesville hosted a presentation about the difference between palliative and hospice care and confirming health care wishes with family. Harrisonburg-164 held presentations about Alzheimer’s research, and the history of German WWII POWs interned in the Shenandoah Valley, and an explanation of Medicare Advantage plans to help with insurance open season decisions.

As Chair of the 2024 VFN Conference Committee, I have been deeply involved in planning the 2024 Conference, which will be held in the lovely Shenandoah Valley. We are looking forward to receiving responses to our recent survey sent out on **FEDHub** to assist the Conference Committee in planning the 2024 VFN Conference. I hope to see **YOU** in Harrisonburg in April 2024!

Missy Groppe

Area VIII

Area VIII has approximately 330 chapter members and I am happy to report that all four chapters in the area are doing well, meeting in person, staffed with chapter officers, and have money in the bank. Area VIII faces all the same challenges with membership recruitment and retention.

Chapter 90 - Fredericksburg continues to flourish under the leadership of Chapter President Moe Nolet and Vice President Dennis Cole. In August they held a luncheon at the local IHOP. In October Kathy Bass from Blue Cross/Blue Shield briefed the members on changes to BC/BS medical plans.

Chapter 595 - Colonial Beach held a great summer picnic at Ebb Tide Beach near Colonial Beach at a private picnic pavilion plus beach and dock. The chapter supplied fried chicken and the members brought the sides. The food was overflowing. The annual Harvest Supper to support Alzheimer's was held on November 4, 2023, at the Moose Lodge in Colonial Beach. Ticket sales were right at 40 and our special guest was the VFN First Vice President, Larry McIlwee. We had over 30 door prizes and every attendee went home with a door prize. We had a special donation from a chapter member in honor of his wife who died from Alzheimer's. Total money raised was \$2,400. I want to thank the chapter leadership team: Jim Lynch, 1st Vice President, Ann Mills, Second Vice President, Maria Wendt, Secretary, and Stan Palen, Treasurer.

Chapter 1549 – Fauquier under the leadership of President Pat Maderis along with her executive board, Jerry Rosen, Ray Brandenburg, and Ed Cameron, is in decent shape. They meet every other month at the local IHop. Meeting attendance is 10-12 members. Pat Maderis and Ray Brandenburg are meeting with the Fauquier Times/Fauquier Now news media to arrange for an advertisement in the monthly Fauquier magazine which will hopefully reach retired federal employees in the area and get some new members.

Chapter 2112 - Caroline continues to meet at the Timbers in Ruther Glen with Myrna Satterwhite, President, Linda Gray, Vice President, and Joyce Tignor, Secretary/Treasurer. They have 16 chapter members. In August they held a summer luncheon at Around the Table, a soul food restaurant in Ashland, VA. Spouses were invited and a wonderful time was had by all.

Leslie Ravenell

Area IX

Area IX is made up of four Northern Virginia Chapters: Manassas, Woodbridge, Springfield, and Annandale, with a total of 2,484 Chapter and National Only members. Although there were some new members, that is a net decrease of 78 members. Chapter membership in Manassas is 124 down six; Springfield 434 down 18; Annandale 259 down 10; and Woodbridge 203 down 14.

Chapter 1159 - Annandale collected 960 pounds of food in September and \$775 for the Annandale Community food pantry. They will have another collection in October and November. At one meeting Larry Lipman, former President of the National Press Club, provided insight on why people create and spread misinformation; what it may look like; tools on how to determine if it is false; and how to avoid spreading it yourself. At another meeting George Kresslein, CPA in Annandale presented suggestions and items to consider before the end of the year regarding taxes due April 15, 2023. Attendance at meetings averages 30.

Chapter 1270 – Woodbridge held a meeting where the speaker was Ross Apter NARFE's Director of Legislative and Political Affairs. However, he is no longer with NARFE. Woodbridge had its annual picnic that was attended by over 30 attendees, including four local state politicians and one candidate for Prince William County Board of Supervisors Chair at Large.

Chapter 893 - Springfield had a speaker from the Fairfax County Emergency Management and Security office. This office is like the Federal Emergency Management Office. She had useful tips plus gave out bags of needed items, such as a thermal blanket and small can opener. Brian Slawski, VP of the Burke Historical Society, spoke about the History of Gold Nationally and Locally. In December, Springfield will have its 60th Anniversary Party. Attendance averages 15.

Chapter 386 - Manassas had a speaker from the Trex Company which has a manufacturing facility in Virginia. The presentation described how the company uses recycled materials to produce wood decking and railing. They use returned plastic bags plus wood chips and sawdust to make the products. In August Prince William County Solid Waste Communications Analyst Deborah Campbell discussed proper disposal and recycling and the benefits of this behavior on our environment and community. The benefit of funeral pre-planning was the topic in September. Attendance averages 15.

John Bankson

Area X

Six Chapters make up Area X in Northern Virginia. Arlington Chapter is having success in improving in-person meeting attendance with interesting speakers. Fairfax Chapter is still having difficulty improving in-person attendance since Covid. Even the use of Zoom has attracted few additional participants. The Legion has set a minimum payment for 16 meals for each meeting. Even the FEHB meeting did not attract as many attendees as in previous years. Vienna-Oakton continues with good attendance, often with Vienna political representatives as speakers. Dulles Chapter also has good attendance and often has congressional and Virginia political representatives as speakers. McLean and Metro chapters have had difficulties re-starting since Covid.

Chapter 7 – Arlington does not meet in July and August. The fall programs beginning in September drew increased attendance from members, averaging 20 per month. Programs included presentations by the Arlington Neighborhood Village, Capital Caring Health including the use of robotic pets for Alzheimer's and other dementia patients, and the annual Blue Cross/Blue Shield update. The holiday luncheon in December will feature re-elected Delegate Patrick Hope as our speaker. Chapter officers for 2024 elected in November include Pat Meyers, President, Ed Weiler, 1st VP/Legislation Chair, Nancy Palmerino, Secretary and Jim Hall, Treasurer. The office of 2nd VP/Membership remains vacant.

In our sampling of members for Region X VP Robert Allen's request, they found a wide variety of member volunteer activities outside of NARFE, including committee work for Arlington County's Commission on Aging, local food pantry service, gardening for a county park system, volunteer service with the Arlington Neighborhood Village and charity work with the American Association of University Women to name a few.

They continue to be active in NARFE activities, participating in VFN training sessions such as the recent parliamentary procedures program. Ed Weiler attended the Health Solutions Summit in DC in November which included Hill speakers and expert panels on the physician payment system of the future and reforming Medicare Advantage and Fee for Service while improving trust fund solvency and maintaining access to quality care.

Chapter 489 - Mclean-Great Falls has not had any meetings due to lack of interest in attending meetings. They have plans for a Holiday get together this December.

Chapter 737 - Fairfax has 252 Chapter members and 314 National members for a total of 566. The chapter president is actively seeking more volunteers to serve the chapter on the first Tuesday of the month. A summary of recent and future presentations is given below. In-person attendance is problematic with attendance of 18 in September and 14 in October. Board meetings are held monthly via Zoom. Programs included Jim Radigan, US Navy retired, who talked about his tenure as Navy Commander of the Antarctica Expedition. His pictures and stories embellished his narrative. They also had a report on Alzheimer's Research with a video speaker.

The following members are candidates nominated for the November chapter election: President, Charles Fleming; Vice-President, Ted Pasek; Secretary, Jim Mays; Treasurer, Donna Shackelford. Donations for "Food for Others" are collected during the Chapter meetings. Last year donations averaged 185 pounds for each meeting. Contributions to Alzheimer's Research are also collected monthly.

Chapter 1116 – Vienna-Oakton has an active chapter. Members from the Chapter attended the NOVA Caucus Meeting in July. Two members from the Chapter attended the Region X Conference in Frankfort, Kentucky in September.

The Chapter hosted the first 2023 Election Forum for the candidates for the Town Council of Vienna and the Mayor at the Chapter's September 19, 2023, Membership meeting. The guests at the meeting included Linda Colbert, the Mayor of the Town of Vienna, and six of the current candidates for Vienna Town Council. Also attending was Brian Trompeter, a Staff Writer for the "Gazette Leader" local Newspaper. The event was well advertised in the local media and there was a good turnout from residents in the Town of Vienna. A front-page article on the forum was published in the newspaper, www.gazetteleader.com dated September 28, 2023 mentioning that the event was hosted by NARFE.

The October Chapter meeting featured Michele Nesbitt-Johnson, from Blue Cross/Blue Shield. The Chapter has a full slate of officers for the coming year and will have a new Secretary.

Chapter 1241 - Dulles had a very successful September meeting with Virginia Senator Jennifer Boysko (D-33) as guest speaker. With re-districting she successfully ran and was elected to represent District 38. She just announced that she is a candidate for U.S. Representative for the 10th District, currently held by Representative Jennifer Wexton, who is not running again for health reasons. U.S. Representative Gerry Connolly's District Director Marlon Dubuisson provided an update and information on constituent services in October. We look forward to having NARFE National President Bill Shackelford as guest speaker in November and electing 2024 officers.

Chapter 1665 – Metro Northern Virginia is still not meeting and has surveyed members to try and re-start chapter meetings. Meeting location is still unresolved.

Ted Pasek



ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE (ECC)

The VFN ECC has been actively working on various initiatives to improve communication within the Virginia Federation of NARFE (National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association) (VFN) and enhance its online presence. Here's a summary of our key points.

Committee Structure:

- The ECC is responsible for developing, revising, and monitoring communication policies, social networking accounts, and electronic communication platforms for VFN.
- The committee collaborates with key VFN officers and representatives from different areas to facilitate communication between the ECC and Area Vice Presidents, Chapter Presidents, and their members.
- Regular meetings are held to research, review, educate, and develop procedures to strengthen VFN's communication systems.

Key Committee Members:

- Dr. Constance T. Bails, Ph.D. serves as the ECC Program Chairperson.
- Other key members include Stan Palen (Webmaster), John Bails (Net Coordinator), Debbie Fisk (VFN Secretary), and Kathy Arpa (Newsletter Editor).

Area Coordinators:

- Area Coordinators have been assigned to various geographic areas to ensure effective communication between the ECC, Area Vice Presidents, and Chapter Officers.

Completed Initiatives:

- Updates have been made to F7 information.
- ECC support is available to Area Vice Presidents and Chapter Officers.
- Committee members have access to and training for updating Chapter Calendars.
- The F7 reporting project is complete.
- The VFN website has dedicated webpages for various programs, complete with administrators and information about committee members.

Ongoing and Future Initiatives:

- Training and implementation of a feature for WordPress to allow Area Coordinators to update websites assigned to their Area.
- Development of webpages for National Legislation, State Legislation, and Website/WordPress training.
- Offering newsletter development training to chapters upon request.
- Developing an ECC Mission Statement and Job Responsibilities for inclusion in the updated VFN Handbook.
- Database Management training for chapter officers to update AMS Records correctly.
- Completed the National & Federation Database Project to update VFN records. This is now a project that National is trying to coordinate with all Federations.
- Utilizing various social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter) to increase VFN's visibility within the NARFE membership and the federal community.
- Prioritizing FEDHub learning and teaching it to VFN officers and the VFN Board.
- We are currently in the process of coordinating electronic training with the VFN Training Committee on all available electronic platforms that are currently being used by the VFN. FED-Hub, Zoom, Facebook, and Twitter (X). The training session will resume in February 2024.

Overall, the ECC is committed to enhancing communication within the Virginia Federation and expanding its online presence to engage more effectively with its members and the federal community. It also recommends prioritizing FEDHub learning as a key initiative for the future.

Constance T. Bails, Ph.D.

Electronic Communication, Chairperson





Meet our New VFN Parliamentarian

Beatrice Squire

Beatrice joined the VFN Board at our October 2023 Meeting in Fredericksburg. Beatrice is a retired federal employee. She has extensive experience adjudicating claims, drafting hearings and appeals regulations, and serving as the agency's ombudsman.

Specific Parliamentary Experience:

- Has been an active member of the National Association of Parliamentarians more than 20 years, and actively involved at all levels, as an officer, committee chair or committee member, and workshop presenter. I am credentialed as a Professional Registered Parliamentarian.
- Long term parliamentary experience with many organizations: Federally Employed Women, District 27 of International Toastmasters, Northern Virginia Alumna Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Blue Ridge Region of International Training in Communication.
- Provide parliamentary services to religious, community and social organizations on an ongoing basis. Currently serve as parliamentarian of Federally Employed Women Foundation for Education and Training.
- Served as President of the Virginia State Association of Parliamentarians for the 2021-2023 term, and as an officer in all positions except Treasurer.
- Served many terms as President and held all other offices of the Northern Virginia Marching and Gavel Society, (local parliamentary unit); currently serve as Treasurer.

Welcome to the VFN Board!