

**January 2024**



# MANASSAS CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

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

Chapter email:  
narfe356@hotmail.com

**No Chapter Luncheon Meeting in January.** We are now Meeting Bimonthly. Our Next Luncheon Meeting will be in February.

## Next Meeting Date

**February 21**

*Bob Evans*  
*10830 Promenade Ln.,*  
*Manassas, VA*

**Lunch**  
**11:30 AM**  
**Program**  
**12:30 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.

## From The Chapter President

I hope everyone had a great holiday season and we send all best wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year. Once again I wanted to let you know that you can contact me or any of the Chapter Officers or Committee Chairs by e-mail using the Chapter's e-mail address: [narfe356@hotmail.com](mailto:narfe356@hotmail.com). We welcome your feedback—positive or negative.

The Executive Committee joins me in thanking those members who attended the annual Holiday Party for your presence and for your generosity. The Chapter collected \$210 in food gift cards for SERVE and the raffle netted \$90 for the Alzheimer's Fund.

I wanted to clarify an issue that arose at our December meeting with respect to the timeframe available to opt out of the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plans that were offered by providers in the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program during this past Open Season. If you are a member of one of the plans offering a MPDP and are enrolled in Medicare Part A or Medicare Parts A & B, you were automatically enrolled in the MPDP plan unless you opted-out. Per the Blue Cross website ([www.fepblue.org](http://www.fepblue.org)), for those who wish to opt of the MPDP after January 1, 2024, you should contact Medicare at 1-700-633-4227 or for those who have

Blue Cross as a secondary provider you can also contact Blue Cross by writing to: FEP Medicare Prescription Drug Program, P.O. Box 3539, Scranton, PA 18505. If you have already opted out of the drug program, you can re-enroll during Open Season in a future year. If you are subject to the income-related monthly adjustment amount for Medicare Part B, that is those single filers making more than \$103,000 or \$206,000 for a joint return, you should examine the new drug formularies and compare them with your own drug costs, as the additional premium cost you will incur each month may not be to your advantage. Blue Cross still has a drug comparison tool on its website. See also our November Newsletter for additional information, including a chart that lists the monthly premiums for the MPDP for various income levels. The November Chapter Newsletter (in fact all of the 2023 Chapter Newsletters) can be accessed on the Virginia Federation website, [www.vanarfe.org](http://www.vanarfe.org). You can click on either the Chapter link or the Resources link at the top of the page.

Remember we are not going to be meeting in January this year, but we look forward to having you join us for our luncheon/meeting on February 21 at Bob Evans at 11:30.

Mary M. Brandt,  
President

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

In case of inclement weather, we will follow the plans for Prince William County schools.

- ♦ If schools are closed, the meeting will be canceled.
- ♦ If schools are opening late, we will hold our meeting as usual.

## Future Meetings:

**Chapter luncheon meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month. Beginning in 2024, we will meet bimonthly on the even numbered months.**

**February 21—Speaker TBD**

**April 17—Speaker TBD**

**Our Executive Committee will continue meeting virtually on the first Tuesday of each month.**

## Legislation Update and News of Note

### 2024 Federal Worker Pay Raise

On December 21, President Joe Biden signed an Executive Order implementing his FY 2024 budget proposal to provide civilian federal workers with a 4.7% across-the-board boost to basic pay, alongside an average 0.5% increase in locality pay. This marks the largest authorized pay increase for federal workers since the Carter administration adopted a 9.1% average raise in 1980, as well as a 0.6% increase over last year's raise, which itself marked a 20-year high. Under the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act, when Congress does not act on federal pay in a given year, the pay adjustment is made by the President via Executive Order. The pay raise will go into effect for the first full pay period of 2024, which for most federal workers begins January 14. As authorized in the fiscal 2024 National Defense Authorization Act, military service personnel also will see an average 5.2% pay raise next year.

Source: Government Executive, December 20, 2023

### 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)

President Joe Biden signed the NDAA into law December 22. The legislation passed the House on July 14 and the Senate on July 27 and then went to conference. The Senate agreed to the conference report on December 13 and the House approved it on December 14. This bill authorizes FY 2024 appropriations and sets forth policies for Department of Defense programs and activities, military construction, the national security programs of the Department of Energy and the Maritime Administration. It also authorizes appropriations for the Defense Nuclear Safety Board and the Naval Petroleum Reserves. The bill authorizes appropriations, but it does not provide budget authority, which is provided by appropriations legislation.

Source: [www.congress.gov](http://www.congress.gov)

### 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session Legislative Calendar

The Senate will convene on January 8, 2024 and the House on January 9. There will be only a short window to pass legislation to avoid a partial govern-

ment shutdown on January 19 when funding expires for the Departments of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, Energy, Veterans Affairs and Agriculture, the Food and Drug Administration and military construction. Funding for the Department of Commerce, Justice, Defense, Homeland Security, Interior, Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, Financial Services and General Government, the legislative branch and foreign operations will expire on February 2.

Source: [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov); [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov); December Chapter Newsletter

## NARFE WEBINARS

### Upcoming NARFE Webinars:

No new webinars yet announced

### Recent NARFE Webinars:

#### Estate Planning: Strategies for Feds Wednesday, December 13

An effective estate plan specifies not only what happens upon your death, but also what happens if you're incapacitated. It helps avoid messy legal battles and ensures state law doesn't dictate who takes care of you and who gets your money. **Mark Keen, CFP**, will show you how to build an effective estate plan that specifically addresses your federal benefits.

[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.

## Alzheimer's Corner

*Marilyn Markman, RN*

Well, here it is - 2024! This would make Monk, the main character in the TV series MONK, very happy - he disliked odd numbers!

With the beginning of a new year we are bombarded with advice-

- Diet - eat meat, don't eat meat, etc.
- Exercise - use this piece of equipment, walk more, run more, etc.
- Financial - buy a new house now, don't buy a new house now, etc.

My advice to you - pick and choose what is right for you and just Be Happy!

One thing I do want to share is an article in the September 2023 JAMA magazine, "How Sedentary Behavior is Linked to Dementia". A study by David Raichlen, professor of biological sciences and anthropology at the University of Southern California Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Science, found that people aged 60 and over who spend more than 10 hours a day engaged in sedentary behavior (defined by the author as any waking behavior characterized by a low energy expenditure while sitting or reclining) are at higher risk of dementia compared with those who are sedentary for less time. "The link between sedentary behavior is nonlinear, so that at lower amounts of sitting time there was not significant increase risk" stated Raichlen. "After about 10 hours of sedentary behavior, risks increase significantly. Ten hours was associated with an 8% increase of dementia and twelve hours per day was associated with a 63% increase in dementia."

They also found that even if this sedentary time is broken up by periods of activity, it is the total time spent sitting that appears to have an impact on dementia risk. "Many of us are familiar with the common advice to break up long periods of sitting by getting up every 30 minutes or so to stand or walk around. We wanted to see if those types of patterns are associated with dementia risk. We found that

once you take into account the total time spent sedentary, the length of individual sedentary periods didn't really matter," said Raichlen.

The exact reason why sedentary lifestyles may be linked to dementia risk is unclear, so the research and testing continues! With all the information from this study, should we be signing up for a marathon race? The answer is no - unless you do marathon races. But we should be moving around at a comfortable speed and sitting less!

So, again the magic word is Research, and hopefully through David Raichlen and his lab of researchers, an answer can be found regarding one of the contributing factors to dementia.

Research is also moving forward through medication. The latest is Lomedem-B, which is now in Phase 2a clinical trial of people with mild Alzheimer's disease. Supporting research through NARFE is an excellent way to continue our fight against this awful disease!

You can help to support our chapter's Alzheimer's fund-raising goal with your donations. Checks should be written out to "NARFE Alzheimer's Research" and in memo write "NARFE Chapter 356". Send checks to:

NARFE Chapter 356

8818 Cather Ave.

Manassas, VA 20110-6104

Your checks will be forwarded to the Alzheimer's Association through NARFE. You will receive confirmation from us as well as the Alzheimer's Association.

## Previous Chapter Meeting, December 20th

Chapter 356 held its annual Christmas/Holiday party with ten members and a guest present. A floral arrangement from the Flower Gallery of Manassas, a cheese tray, and a cookie tin were raffled off and garnered \$90 for the Alzheimer's Fund. Grocery gift cards in the amount totaling \$210 were collected for SERVE.

A short business meeting was conducted with officer and committee reports. The Minutes of the November chapter meeting, as they appeared in the Newsletter, were approved and the Treasurer's Report was accepted. The \$32 collected through the raffle at the November chapter and coin proceeds of \$9.88 have been donated to the Alzheimer's Fund bringing the total year to date donations to \$41.88. Membership Chair Helen Brooks reported that the current chapter membership is 127. This past year we had 14 new members join our chapter. This is the largest number of new members that we have had in the past three years. President Brandt reminded members that the Chapter maintains an email account which is identified in our newsletter but has not been well publicized. Members are encouraged to use that as another way to reach chapter officers and committee chairs. President Mary Brandt advised members to watch for upcoming legislative action in the next few weeks regarding the FY 2024 Budget. When TSP converted on-line accounts to a new system, the designation of beneficiaries was not converted to electronic format. While TSP advises that paper copies of the designation of beneficiaries remain on file, Brandt suggested members might be well served to recreate the designation of beneficiaries in the new electronic format. In response to questions that arose concerning the timeframe for opting out of the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Program, President Brandt indicated that she would seek clarification and provide that information to members in the upcoming weeks.

President Brandt gave brief highlights of the Virginia Federation (VFN) Training Session that was held via Zoom on November 29, 2023. There has been a huge drop in NARFE membership from when it peaked at one-half million members in the 1980s to 134,000 today. This impacts NARFE's ability to lobby Congress for support of NARFE programs and initiatives. The VFN will give \$10 in addition to the \$10 NARFE national is offering to those who recruit new members to NARFE during the recruitment drive currently underway and concluding in December.

John Bankson, VFN Area IX Vice President, swore in the officers at the conclusion of the meeting.

The next regular meeting of Chapter 356 will be held on Wednesday, February 21, 2024, at Bob Evans Restaurant on Sudley Road in Manassas at 11:30 am.

Carol G. Campbell  
Secretary

**Happy New Year**  
**2024**

## Chapter Officers for 2024



Standing at right is John Bankson, VFN Area IX Vice President, to swear in Manassas Chapter officers. From left: Mary Brandt, President; Carol Campbell, Secretary; and Richard Horte, Treasurer. Priscilla Saboe, Vice President was absent.

### **Chapter Membership Report**

No change in membership since our December report

Chapter 356 membership as of January 3 is 127 members.

### **CHAPTER 356 OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES**

<b>President</b>	Mary Brandt	703-753-3954
<b>Vice President</b>	Priscilla Saboe	703-361-1150
<b>Secretary</b>	Carol Campbell	703-389-4702
<b>Treasurer</b>	Richard Horte	703-368-8767
<b>Membership Comm.</b>	Helen Brooks	703-791-6737
<b>National Legislation</b>	Vacant	
<b>Program Comm.</b>	Vacant	
<b>Service Officer</b>	Priscilla Saboe	703-361-1150
<b>Sunshine Comm.</b>	Priscilla Saboe	703-361-1150
<b>Alzheimer's Comm.</b>	Marilyn Markman, RN	703-791-4329
<b>Chapter Chaplain</b>	Vacant	
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Richard Horte	703-368-8767

**Chapter Email Address:** [narfe356@hotmail.com](mailto:narfe356@hotmail.com)  
**Use this address to contact officers and committee chairs by email**

### **Email Address Changes**

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

### **Manassas Chapter Newsletter Online**

We distribute our newsletter to Chapter members using email addresses on file at NARFE. If you are not receiving NARFE email, please contact us or NARFE Headquarters at Member Services (703-838-7760). Our newsletters are also available at the Virginia Federation website at [www.vanarfe.org/newsletters/](http://www.vanarfe.org/newsletters/). Scroll down to Current Chapter Newsletters, Area IX, Chapter 356.