

February 2024



MANASSAS CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

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

Chapter email:
narfe356@hotmail.com

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.

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.

April 17—Speaker TBD

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

Overview of Prince William County Historic Resources, Kevin Pawlak, Historic Site Manager, Prince William County Office of Historic Preservation

Our speaker will give an overview of the many historic resources covering our county's 300 year history. The Office of Historic Preservation serves as the stewards of County-owned historic structures, cultural and natural resources, historic landscapes, and artifacts. Their role is to identify, protect, preserve, rehabilitate, and interpret historic sites for public use and posterity

It's not too early to think about attending the Virginia Federation of NARFE (VFN) 70th Annual Meeting and Conference, which will be held April 7-10, 2024 at the Hotel Madison in Harrisonburg, VA. Invited guest speakers include Senator Kaine, Congressman Cline, Congresswoman Spanberger, Virginia Governor Youngkin, and NARFE National President Shackelford. Hotel rates are \$107/night plus tax and include free parking. The registration fee includes the conference, workshops, a welcome reception, a banquet, and two lunches. You can take advantage of an "Early Bird Special" of \$75 for the registration fee if you register by February 15, 2024 (\$90 thereafter). The final registration deadline is March 15.

Our Chapter will reimburse members who attend for the registration fee upon receipt of a copy of your registration confirmation. Please contact me or Richard Horte, Treasurer, for further details. The registration form can be found at <https://vanarfe.org/2024-annual-meeting-and-conference-2/> and can be completed online or downloaded and mailed in. I would encourage members to consider participating as the conference presents a good opportunity to learn more about NARFE and to meet other NARFE members from throughout Virginia. In the meantime, consider joining us on February 21 at Bob Evans.

Mary M. Brandt,
President

From The Chapter President

Well, as you can see from this month's Legislative Update on p.2, Congress has continued to fund the government on a month-to-month basis and legislation of any kind is slow to advance through the 118th Congress, although NARFE continues to press for the repeal of the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) and encourages members to urge their legislators for passage of the Social Security Fairness Act of 2023, which would accomplish that goal.

You might be interested to learn that when the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) converted to a new electronic system for member accounts, the paper beneficiary information was not transferred. Although I am assured that the paper forms remain on file, you might consider logging onto your account (or creating same) on the www.tsp.gov website and adding your beneficiary information to the new electronic system.

Legislation Update and News of Note

Congress Passes Stopgap Spending Bill

On January 18, both houses of Congress passed a two-tiered continuing resolution to fund the Departments of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, Energy, Veterans Affairs and Agriculture through March 1. The remaining agencies, whose funding was scheduled to expire on February 2, will be funded through March 8. The first tranche of agencies would have seen their funding expire at midnight January 19. The House passed the bill on a bipartisan basis 314-108 and the Senate passed the legislation by a 77-18 vote. This marks the third stop gap spending bill for FY 2024 and follows an agreement between Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY), and House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) on the overall spending levels for the fiscal year.

Source: Government Executive, January 18, 2024

Presidential Transitions

On January 26, Sens. Gary Peters (D-MI) and Susan Collins (R-ME) introduced The Agency Preparation for Transitions Act, which is designed to speed up federal agencies' presidential transition preparation and ensure they are prepared for extended periods without a known electoral winner. The bill would enhance communications between federal agencies and campaign teams and between the White House and agency transition teams and would provide greater resources to career employees at federal agencies tasked with preparing potential future administrations. The measure would clarify and add to the responsibilities of the federal transition coordinator within the General Services Administration, who would, going forward, be appointed two years before any presidential election. The measure would move the first meeting of the agency transition council to nine months prior to the election and require it to meet once per month. It would create new paths for identifying lessons learned, require more participation in transition planning from career employees within the White House and create a new transition council made up

of small and independent agencies. The measure would also require the Government Accountability Office to review the effectiveness of the most recent transition every four years.

Source: Government Executive, January 26, 2023

FY 2025 Federal Pay Proposal

On January 30, Rep. Gerald Connolly (D-VA) and Sen. Brian Schatz (D-HI) introduced the [Federal Adjustment of Income Rates Act](#) that would provide federal employees with an average pay raise of 7.4% next year. The bill would provide federal workers with a 4.0% across-the-board increase in basic pay next year, as well as an average increase of 3.4% to locality pay. The measure has 59 cosponsors—all Democrats—in the House. The FAIR Act has been introduced—with slightly different pay raise figures—each year for the better part of a decade. Last year, the lawmakers proposed an average increase of 8.7%, which would have been split between a 4.7% across-the-board raise and an average 4% increase in locality pay. Though the bill is rarely acted upon, progressive lawmakers and union officials have frequently cited it in debates over annual appropriations. President Biden's pay raise proposal for FY 2025 is expected to be released alongside his annual budget plan sometime in the next several weeks.

Source: Government Executive, January 30, 2024

FY 2024 Appropriations Funding Levels

After weeks of negotiations between Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) and Rep. Kay Granger (R-TX), who respectively chair the Senate and House Appropriations Committees, agreement has been reached on how much money will be allocated to each of the 12 bills Congress must pass to fund government for FY 2024. With those allocations set, lawmakers can now complete their work of setting line-by-line funding for every program and office in agencies across government. The breakthrough follows a deal between Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) on overall spending levels for the fiscal year, which set \$1.66 trillion as the top-line spending level. Murray and Granger have not disclosed the funding for each of the 12 spending bills, but on an overall basis defense spending will jump 3%

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to \$886 billion and non-defense spending will stay essentially flat relative to fiscal 2023 at nearly \$773 billion. Appropriators must now determine how much money each agency and office will receive and decide what, if any, policy changes to include in the bills. Adding to the complications is the ongoing negotiation over supplemental funding for foreign aid and border security reforms. While those talks have stalled, legislators may seek to add to the Homeland Security Department appropriations through the regular funding process at the expense of other agencies. Lawmakers have also stressed they do not want to pass all 12 measures together in one omnibus bill, as Congress has done in most recent years. A failure to pass full-year appropriations that would require another continuing resolution (CR) in March could trigger a provision of the 2023 debt ceiling law which provides that a CR that goes into May would force significant across the board cuts that would most likely require employee furloughs and major disruptions to agency operations.

Source: Government Executive, January 29, 2024

It's that year again. Every 4 years we get an extra day in February and also get to celebrate a special event.

Yes, this is **L**et's **E**lect **A** **P**resident year. Be sure to vote in the Presidential primary being held on March 5. Early voting has already begun. Contact the Prince William County Office of Elections at <https://www.pwcvotes.org/earlyvoting> for further details.



Alzheimer's Corner

Marilyn Markman, RN

This could be a very, very exciting year in the Alzheimer's world thanks to neuroscientists and researchers!

There is a new blood test being studied. I think this is the third time I've written about a blood test. Could the third time be the charm?

This blood test is testing for a key biomarker of Alzheimer's called P-tau217. Until now, to identify the buildup of beta amyloid and tau protein (plaque) in the brain, a brain scan or spinal tap was used, both inaccessible and costly. This simple blood test was found to be up to 96% accurate in identifying levels of beta amyloid and up to 97% accurate in identifying tau according to the journal JAMA Neurology.

Last year, the first blood test assessing beta amyloid protein could be purchased by the consumer in the U.S., called AD-Detect. Quest Diagnostics, the company behind the test has stressed it is not meant to diagnose Alzheimer's but to help assess a person's risk of developing the disease. The new test called "ALZpathpTau217" is currently available for research only but is expected to be available soon. The pTau217 can play an important role as an initial screening tool.

Thanks to neuroscientist Dr Ali Rezai and his team at the Rochester Neuroscience Institute in Morgantown, West Virginia, a new procedure using ultrasound to slow down cognitive symptoms of Alzheimer's is being studied.

The study using a combination of the fairly new medication Aducanumab and ultrasound focuses on reducing cerebral amyloid beta peptides. These peptides are produced in all individuals, but those with Alzheimer's fail to clear them out from the brain. Aducanumab is an antibody that binds to the amyloid peptides and reduces its buildup. The problem is a blood brain barrier that keeps toxins from leaking into the brain, which also keeps a full dose of medications from the brain.

In the procedure (which has been tested on 3 people) Aducanumab is administered by IV a few

hours before the ultrasound. The patient wears a helmet and a thousand beams of ultrasound energy is aimed at brain tissue the size of a pencil point. There is a 3D view of the target in the brain and an IV solution of microscopic bubbles vibrate and open up the target's blood brain barrier for 24-48 hours and then reseals. This allows the medication Aducanumab to reach the plaque. The patient is awake and feels nothing. This treatment is done once or twice a month over six months and can reduce more than 50% of the plaque than by using the medication alone. This treatment has been approved by the FDA.

Although this treatment sounds promising, the underlying cause is still there. A new study has been started - first clear out the plaques then use a different dose to reverse the damage and boost the brain more.

As you can see, research is working and is ongoing, so your support of the NARFE Alzheimer's Fund (which goes straight to research) is very important.

I saw Dr Rezai on a segment of "60 Minutes". If you have access to YOU Tube you can see this episode. It was on January 14, 2024, Season 56 Episode 16. The segment was called "Master of the mind". It is about 20 minutes into the show and lasted about 5 minutes. I hope you get to watch it - very interesting and very informative.

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.

NARFE WEBINARS

Upcoming NARFE Webinars:

Roth Conversions: A Path to Maximize the Value of Your TSP

Thursday, February 29 | 2 p.m. ET

For many retired TSP participants, tax planning is an afterthought rather than a proactive approach to maximizing the after-tax value of their TSP. Roth conversions provide a proactive approach to not only help create greater after-tax balances during your lifetime but also preserve the after-tax value for your beneficiaries as well.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

Recent NARFE Webinars:

FEGLI: Is It the Best Option for Federal Retirees? Thursday, January 25, 2024

Life insurance is critical to your dependents' financial well-being. Determining whether Federal Employee Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) is right for you, and which options to consider, can be a daunting task. Federal employees and retirees can choose between FEDGLI Basic and Optional, as well as policies in the open life insurance marketplace. Understanding the cost and value of these plans during the various stages of your career and after retirement is key to making the best choice for you. In this webinar, NARFE federal benefits experts Tammy Flanagan and Mark Keen, CFP, walk you through the various aspects of FEGLI and FEGLI alternatives.

[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 rea-

Chapter Membership Report

Welcome to our Chapter

Zachariah Cherrington

Chapter 356 membership as of February 2 is 128 members.

CHAPTER 356 OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

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

Chapter Email Address: 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/. Scroll down to Current Chapter Newsletters, Area IX, Chapter 356.