



March 2024

Williamsburg Chapter 685 – Celebrating 65 years!



Elected Officers for 2023

Hazel Braxton, President

rbraxton7@cox.net

Penny Kell, Secretary

pzkell@cox.net

Larry Leiby, Treasurer

Mary Grace Dorsey, 1st Vice President

Will McElfresh, 2nd Vice President

See chapter website for appointed program chairs and officers.

Reading the Chapter Newsletter Online

Williamsburg Chapter 685 newsletter w/pictures

- *To go directly* to our Chapter 685 web page, Type in browser: <https://vanarfe.org/Chapter-685/>
- FedHub (www.narfe.org) Click on **Membership**, select **NARFE Chapters**, click on **Find a Chapter**, Select **VA**, Select **Williamsburg**
- Go to <https://www.vanarfe.org> Virginia Federation of NARFE (VFN) main page; Click on **Chapters**. Look for **685** in **Area 1**; or
- On the same VFN main page go to **Resources**, then to **Information & Documents** and click on **Newsletters**; again, look for **685** in **Area 1**.

President's Message by Hazel Braxton, Chapter President

The Robins are out in large numbers, the flowers are beginning to bloom, and Chapter 685 is ready for the new season. Beginning in March we will launch our 50-50 raffle to increase our coffers for extra expenditures such as our no cost August picnic. The Chapter already has programs outlined until September; and members are bringing items for the basket(s) to be auctioned at the VFN conference in April. We encourage chapter members to bring items to contribute to the basket to be auctioned off to raise money for the NARFE Alzheimer's Research Project. This is a NARFE signature project, and the research will hopefully have lasting positive

impacts.

There are some areas that the Chapter needs assistance. We need someone to volunteer to be the Nominating chair. We will hold elections this year. There will be other up-coming needs. Let us continue to do the work needed by Chapter 685.

Secretary's Corner by Penny Kell, Chapter Secretary **NARFE Luncheons**

We have had several successful luncheon meetings at Colonial Heritage this year with 32-35 participants and excellent speakers provided by Ginny Taylor. We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at the clubhouse in Colonial Heritage checking in at 11 AM, socializing, chapter business, and lunch is at 11:30 AM followed by a guest speaker. The notice is sent out including the entrée choices the week before the luncheon. The luncheon usually includes an entrée and dessert. It may also include soup or a salad. RSVPs along with menu selections are due the **Thursday** before the 2nd Tuesday lunch. No shows are charged \$21 because of our contract with Colonial Heritage.

Ginny Taylor has arranged for more excellent guest speakers. Last month we had Scott McCoy from Bodhi Bee Farms, LLC in Williamsburg. Our March 12 luncheon Kevin Ernst, the Manager of the Wild Bird Store in Williamsburg is our scheduled speaker. Our public relations chair, Tom Kell, has been successful in getting our NARFE event pictures in the Virginia Gazette and getting us new members, too.



Chapter Introductions

Please come and join us for socializing with your friends and meeting new ones. We have had several new members and some returning previous members at our last meetings.

Join Us for Lunch and Other Chapter Events

When: 2nd Tuesday of the month September – May
Special Mtgs: June & August
Where: Colonial Heritage (CH), 6520 Arthur Hills Drive, Williamsburg, VA 23188
Time: 11 am social & chapter business, 11:30 lunch followed by Guest Speak
Cost: \$21 Cash, credit card, or check/payable to cash. Includes: lunch, dessert, tax & tip
RSVP: Penny Kell, Secretary pzkell@cox.net by the Thursday before the meeting
CH requires a head count.



Great times at NARFE Luncheon



Very Interesting topics

Words From Our Treasurer *by Larry Leiby, Chapter 685 Treasurer*

Our 2024 Budget was unanimously approved at the Executive Committee meeting in January. Chapter funds are received monthly through NARFE HQ remittances based on our membership dues. Presently, there are eight Life Members in Chapter 685. Recall that Life Members pay their dues only once to NARFE HQ. I'm working on a system that ensures the annual chapter dues are also received from our Life Members.

The 2023 average attendance at our monthly Chapter meetings, less Guest Speakers, was 35. This year's average attendance is also 35. At each Chapter 685 meeting, our members engage in camaraderie with their fellow federal annuitants (and annuitant spouses) and enjoy a hearty lunch (with dessert), followed by a program of stimulating speakers on a variety of topics. Kudos to our Program Chair - Ginny Taylor! Looking forward to seeing more members at future luncheons!

Per the Executive Committee's direction, I submitted an advertisement to the Program Brochure for the 2024 VFN Conference which will take place in Harrisonburg, VA on April 7-10. Hope to see you there!

Similar to last year, the plan is to reserve a room at the James City Recreation Center for our annual picnic in August. Hope you can join us!

Our 2023 Alzheimer's average monthly donations were \$115. This year's average for the first two months is \$125. Those who wish to contribute a charitable, tax-deductible donation toward the treatment, prevention, and, ultimately, a cure for Alzheimer's can do so by check made payable to **NARFE Alzheimer's Research - including Chapter 685 on the memo line enables us to get credit by the Virginia Federation of NARFE (VFN)**. Either send your check to NARFE Chapter #685, P.O. Box 74, Williamsburg, VA 23187-0074 or submit it when you attend any monthly member luncheons.

The Honorable Rob Wittman, who is District 1's Congressman, is doing his part in furthering Alzheimer's research. Here is an excerpt from his recent newsletter:

"Friend,

As co-chair of the Congressional Public Health Caucus, I'm focused on providing real healthcare solutions that include patient-provider centered reforms to expand choices for consumers, increase access to care, reduce health care costs, and enhance transparency in our healthcare system.

Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia are an urgent public health issue, with [more than 6 million Americans](#) diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. This is why I'm supporting the [BOLD Reauthorization Act](#) to create a nationwide public health infrastructure to properly address dementia.

This bill would:

- *Provide funding for Alzheimer's Public Health Centers of Excellence to expand innovative and effective Alzheimer's detection and diagnosis capabilities*
- *Provide grant funding for state, local, and tribal public health departments to increase public awareness about Alzheimer's and other dementia diseases*
- *Increase data reporting and analysis on cognitive and memory loss disease trends and statistics*
- *Increase assistance and resources for caregivers across the country*

We must keep bureaucracy out of healthcare and champion patient-driven policies. I believe in a better health care future for Virginians that empowers individuals to have greater control over their health care choices and dollars, and personalizes health care to meet individual needs by reducing premiums, deductibles, and overall cost.

Sincerely,

Rob”

Keep Your Records Up-To-Date With NARFE

Remember: If you move, change your email address, or change your telephone number, notify NARFE. This enables you to receive *NARFE Magazine* and email communications from both national headquarters and Chapter 685.

The three ways to notify NARFE are:

- 1) Online, at the NARFE website www.narfe.org – log in and click “My Account”
- 2) Email NARFE at memberrecords@narfe.org
- 3) Telephone toll-free 1 800 456-8410

Chapter 685 Website Updated *by Jeff Fratter, Past President*

Our chapter website is maintained by the Virginia Federation of NARFE Chapters (VFN) at no cost. Many NARFE chapters in Virginia take advantage of this free service. Thanks to Stan Palen, the VFN webmaster, for managing this service.

The Williamsburg 685 website was updated for 2024 to include our newest executive committee members, Judy, Vanessa and Evette. In addition, we added a revised list of YOUR (state) REPRESENTATIVES and new Districts. They are:

J.D. “Danny” Diggs (R) 24th Senate District

Ryan T. Dougle (R) 26th Senate District

Amanda E. Batten (R) 71st House District

W. Chad Green Sr. (R) 69th House District

As you know, our U.S. Senators and Congressman remain the same. However, Senator Kane is up for reelection later this year. You can reach our chapter website at www.vanarfe.org and click on CHAPTERS located on the top menu bar of the VFN main page.

NARFE Bill Tracker Featured in March 2024 Magazine, by Evette Conwell

NARFE is working on behalf of federal employees and retirees by advocating and keeping them informed of pending legislation. There are 5 bills which may be of interest to our chapter. Four concerning the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and one bill concerning FERS COLA. The WEP can affect retirement or disability

benefits. It is how Social Security (SS) calculates these benefits. Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) employees employed after 1956 can be affected by the following provisions of WEP.

1. Earned retirement or disability pension from employer, but the employer did not withhold SS taxes.
2. Eligible for SS retirement or disability benefits from work in other jobs for which you did not pay taxes.

GPO works by reducing the spousal or widower benefit by 2/3 of the monthly non-covered pension and can partially offset to a widower benefit, depending on the amount of the non-covered pension.

- H.R. 82/S.597 Social Security Fairness Act – would eliminate both the WEP & the GPO which unfairly reduces or eliminate SS benefits to public servants.
- HR. 4260 The Public Servants Protection & Fairness Act - bill offers & alternative formula to calculate SS retirement benefits for those who received pension for certain non-covered employment.
- H.R. 4583/S.2280 Social Security 2100 Act – increase benefits, improves cost of living adjustment, restore student benefits, increase access to benefits for children living with grandparents or other relatives. Repeals the WEP.
- H.R. 5342 Equal Treatment of Public Servant Act of 2023 – eliminate the WEP & establish a new formula to ensure the mission of public servant service their full retirement benefits.
- H.R. 866/S.3194 The Equal COLA Act - This bill revises the formula used to calculate the cost-of-living adjustment for annuities paid under the Federal Employees Retirement System to be the same as CSRS retiree.

If you have an opinion about these pending bills, you have the right to contact your elected official to express your gratitude, concerns, or views.

Buy your chapter 685 name badge today...



...and other NARFE merchandise **ONLINE** at www.narfe.org/shopNARFE

Editor's Note: Thank you, Jeff Fratter, for providing 5 years of excellent newsletter reporting and for serving as immediate past Chapter President and serving as Chapter Historian. Your commitment and others who have served and are serving in leadership capacity in NARFE Chapter 0685 is greatly appreciated.