

National Active & Retired Federal Employees Association

Meetings: 2nd Wed of Month Sept through May (except December) Beech Rm, Lubber Run Community Ctr, 300 N. Park Dr., Arlington - 12:15 p.m.

President's Message

By Pat Meyers

Happy Valentines Day! By the time you receive this newsletter, we'll know what the groundhog has predicted for the future. Our January meeting was well attended to hear Corporal Harley Guenther, ACPD, and her partner present a program on scams and frauds, including how to identify and handle them. Several great handouts that were not available at the meeting will be available at our February 14th meeting so please take advantage of them. It was also helpful for our members to share some of their experiences and thoughts.

I want to call your attention to the VFN Conference and 70th Annual Meeting to be held during 7-10 April at the Hotel Madison & Shenandoah Conference Center, 710 S. Main Street, Harrisonburg, VA. The conference theme is: "TOGETHER WE WILL SUCCEED". In addition to business sessions, there will be exciting workshops and presentations, a memorial service, a silent auction for Alzheimer's' research, exhibitors and a banquet to wrap up the conference. The Chapter will reimburse members for registration fees which include the conference, workshops, a welcome reception, banquet and 2 lunches - quite a deal. See information elsewhere in this issue for details re hotel and registration fees. If unable to attend, there are other opportunities to participate also described elsewhere. Registration forms and hotel information will be available at the February meeting and also on the VFN website at <http://www.vanarfe.org>.

Closer to home, please consider filling one of our committee vacancies to help our chapter move forward in 2024. Your Board can't do it all and we invite you to actively participate in decision-making that affects our members. Vacancies exist in the following areas crucial to the chapter: programs, membership, Alzheimer's, public relations, and newsletter, just to name a few. Co-chairs are also welcome. Please let me know if you would be interested in helping or have questions.

Please join us on Valentine's Day for some special treats.

Legislative Corner

By Ed Weiler

**NARFE Launches National Call-Congress Campaign Urging
Mark-Up of Full WEP-GPO Repeal Bill (H.R.82)**

Over the past two years the advocacy work of NARFE and its partners has focused on garnering co-sponsors for H.R.82—a successful effort that has attained over 300 such co-sponsors in the House from both political parties and in over 50 states and territories. Given this widespread popular support, the time is ripe to take things to the next level and push the House Ways and Means Committee to hold a “mark-up” session for the bill, thus teeing it up for a full House vote. *(continued on p. 2)*

Here's where we come in. Don't panic! NARFE's Advocacy Staff has done the prep work for you. All you need to do is go to www.narfe.org and click on: (1) "advocacy"; (2) "advocacy update"; and (3) "Dial in to Advance Repeal of WEP/GPO." Then follow instructions for placing a call (1-866-220-0044) to your Representative (Rep. Don Beyer for most, but not all, Chapter 7 members). While there is even a suggested script for you to follow in case you are at a loss for words, a genuine personal story detailing how you are/will be impacted by WEP-GPO is preferable. No internet access? No problem. Simply dial the Capitol switchboard at 1-866-220-0044, and request to be connected to your Representative's office. In this latter event, you will have to *ad lib*; but at a minimum, make it clear that you are a constituent as well as a NARFE member, and are requesting that he/she urge the House Ways and Means Committee to hold a mark-up session for *H.R.82*.

Once you have earned your lobbying chops with the House, you will be ready to hop over to the Senate side of the Capitol. Yes, Virginia, there is a Senate bill (*S.597*) which is identical to *H.R.82*. I'm invoking Virginia here because one of our Senators (Sen. Mark Warner) is not yet on board as a co-sponsor. To his credit, Sen. Kaine signed on early last year. Here's the drill. Log back into the "advocacy" page on NARFE's website, and follow the same path you took in contacting your Congressperson. For Sen. Warner, you can follow "Script 1," requesting that he become a co-sponsor of *S.597*. For Sen. Kaine, you may use "Script 2," thanking him for his early support. Here again, if internet access is an issue, simply call 1-866-220-0044, and ask for your Senator's respective offices.

State Legislative News Family Caregiver Credit (*HB1078/SB419*)

Covered briefly in last month's *Legislative Corner* was an overview of the Virginia Federation of NARFE's (VFN's) 2024 State Legislative Plan. Among the Plan's four proposals, only one has found its way into a bill submitted back in January--*viz.*, the "*Family Caregiver Tax Credit*." In a nutshell, this bill would authorize a nonrefundable income tax credit for Tax Years 2024-2028 equal to 50 percent of eligible caregiving expenses incurred by a family member, up to a maximum of \$1,000 of expenses per year. Income eligibility for this credit would top out at \$100,000/\$200,000 annual income for individuals and married persons, respectively. A positive note on the prospects for this bill's ultimate passage is its bipartisan sponsorship. *HB 1078* is sponsored by a Democrat (Del. Sam Rasoul: D-38-Roanoke), while *SB419* has a Republican sponsor (Sen. Christopher T. Head; R-SD3-Roanoke).

On a less upbeat note, it's troubling to see that several bills supporting a tax carve-out for various groups (e.g., firefighters and EMS workers; Foreign Service retirees; commissioned officers of NOAA and the Public Health Service) were introduced this year, while VFN's longstanding proposal to exempt CSRS annuities on a par with Social Security benefits once again fell on deaf ears. At this point, the only prospect for tax relief for CSRS annuitants (which of course would be applicable to **all** Virginia taxpayers as well) in the 2024 Session is *SB108* (Sen. David R. Sutterlein: R-SD4-Roanoke). Under this bill, the enhanced standard deduction levels (\$8k/\$16k) enjoyed under current law--but slated to revert to pre-2019 levels (\$3k/\$6k) in 2026-- would be extended indefinitely. Although *SB108* did not figure in VFN's 2024 Legislative Plan, unless you want to go back to the pre-2019 standard deduction amounts, this bill is for you.

70th Annual Virginia Federation of NARFE (VFN) Conference – April 7-10

The Virginia Federation of NARFE (VFN) Annual Conference will be held at the Hotel Madison on April 7-10 in Harrisonburg, VA. The hotel has a restaurant and complimentary parking and the guest rooms have refrigerators and microwaves. The deadline for the Early Bird registration fee of \$75 for the Conference and banquet is February 15. Regular rate registration of \$90 must occur by March 15. The deadline for the discounted hotel room rate of \$107 per night plus tax for the Conference is March 7. All this information and registration forms are available at <https://vanarfe.org/conference-2024/> and at our February meeting.

Become a Conference Supporter

Even if you are not able to attend the conference, you can become a Conference Supporter. Sources of funding beyond the registration and banquet fees are required to fund the Conference. One additional source of funding is from Chapter Members who become Conference Supporters. The names of all Supporters will be listed in the Program Book which will be distributed to each attendee. Chapter members are invited to show their support by contributing in one of the following categories: Platinum (\$100), Gold (\$75), Silver (\$50), Super Angel (\$25), Angel (\$20), Cheerleader (\$15), Booster (\$10) and Supporter (\$5).

If you wish to donate, please complete the form below, with a check payable to 2024 VFN Conference and mail to the address on the bottom of the form. Donations will also be accepted at our February meeting. Mailed contributions must be received by March 1 to guarantee publication of your name in the program book.

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2024 NARFE VFN Conference Supporter

Print your name as you would like it to appear in the program booklet.

Name: _____

Check applicable category:

__ Platinum (\$100) __ Gold (\$75) __ Silver (\$50) __ Super Angel (\$25) __ Angel (\$20) __ Cheerleader (\$15)
__ Booster (\$10) __ Supporter (\$5)

Include check, payable to "2024 VFN Conference" for total amount indicated.

On the Memo line write "2024 VFN Conference Supporter". (Do not mail cash.)

Mail to: Nancy Palmerino, Chapter Supporter Coordinator, 4503 4th Road North, Arlington, VA 22203

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VFN Conference Silent Auction

By Nancy Palmerino

Another feature of the VFN Conference is the Silent Auction for Alzheimer's research. The committee is looking for donations with a minimum value of \$50. Items that have been popular in the past are jewelry, wine, original paintings, collectibles, timeshares, gift cards and baskets. Now is the perfect time to get a start on your spring cleaning and go through cabinets and drawers, and maybe even visit the basement and the attic and discover treasures you forgot you even possessed. Call Nancy Palmerino at 703-243-6546 if you have any questions or to arrange a pick up. Donations may also be brought to the February and March meetings. All donations must be received by April 1 and are tax deductible.

Alzheimer's Report

By Nancy Palmerino

As was reported in the last newsletter, we collected over \$1,400 in donations for Alzheimer's research at our chapter meetings and luncheons last year. We've set a goal of \$1,500 for this year and are off to a good start with \$40 collected at the January meeting. Remember that we are also collecting that loose change that is accumulating in that piggy bank/dish or in your purse.

Membership Report

By Nancy Palmerino

We currently have 275 Chapter members and an additional 446 National members in our chapter area for a total of 721 Chapter and National members. Our chapter memberships include 64 1-year members, 35 2-year members, 101 3-year members, 64 dues withholding members and 11 Life members. We are happy to welcome new members Sharon Davis and Karen Isaacs and look forward to seeing them at our future meetings.

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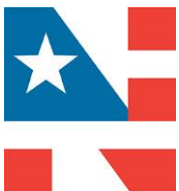
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