



NARFE NEWS

ROANOKE VALLEY CHAPTER 111

2024 OFFICERS

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| President Frances Boatman (540) 774-3031 feboatman@live.com | 1st Vice President Carolyn Tucker (540) 797-5037 cptucker1212@gmail.com | 2nd Vice President Karen Simmons (540) 525-1043 ksim285032@aol.com | Secretary Ellie Long (540) 772-0468 lalaw1986@gmail.com | Treasurer Mark Fisher (540) 772-0984 mcfisher2@cox.net |
|--|---|--|---|--|

TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR OPM: 1-888-767-6738 (M-F, 7:40 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.)

Websites: NARFE: www.narfe.org FEDHub

Chapter 111: <https://www.vfn.org/Chapter-111> VFN: www.vanarfe.org

VFN Facebook: [NARFE Virginia Federation | Facebook](#) [NARFE Virginia Federation | Facebook](#)

VFN National Legislation Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/vfnnatleg>

VFN State Legislation Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/vfnvaleg>

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



March is NARFE-PAC month. With the threat to our earned benefits and protections, we need the Political Action Committee more than ever. Your contributions support our advocacy mission, complement our grassroots efforts, and allow the NARFE lobbyists on Capitol Hill to continue their great work on our behalf.

Federal Employee Education & Assistance Fund (FEEA) is a scholarship program open to children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of NARFE members. The competition is open to high school seniors only. Winners will receive a one-time award of \$1,000. The deadline for the scholarship is March 14th at 3 pm. Visit www.feea.org/our-programs/scholarships/ or www.narfe.org for more information.

Thank you to Phyllis Scruggs for accepting the position of Alzheimer's Chair.

"Together We Will Succeed" is the theme for the VFN Conference in Harrisonburg on April 7–10, hosted by our Chapters in Area VII. Ten of our members will represent Chapter 111. If you would like to join us,

please register prior to March 15 at www.vanarfe.org. Registration includes Conference, Workshops, Welcome Reception, two lunches, and Banquet. Hotel rates are \$107/night plus tax and include free parking. We look forward to learning how to better serve our Chapter and promote NARFE's mission.

VFN Training – March 6 at 2 pm - "FEDHub" and March 27 at 2 pm - "Artificial Intelligence".

NARFE Membership Renewal – When you renew your NARFE membership, be sure to check the box to renew your Chapter 111 membership. Chapter dues are only \$10/year, and fund printing and mailing the newsletter, labels, postage, lunches for guest speakers, annual Holiday luncheon entertainment, and other expenses voted upon by the membership. You don't want to miss out on the fellowship, great programs, and newsletter each month.

Happy Spring! Daylight Savings Time Begins March 10th.

Frances Boatman
President



LEGISLATION

Federal

The Social Security Fairness Act of 2023. The Social Security Fairness Act, [H.R.82/S.597](#) would fully repeal the WEP and GPO. H.R.82 has 308 co-sponsors. S.597 has 51 co-sponsors including Senator Tim Kaine. There has been no action in either chamber though co-sponsors from both continue to sign on to their respective bills.

Saving the Civil Service Act. [H.R.1002/S. 399](#) would prevent the return of Schedule F, a statutory loophole created by the previous administration that would have bypassed the system of rules ensuring civil servants are hired and fired based on merit. The bill would also block any position in the federal competitive service, created after September 30, 2020, from being reclassified outside of merit system principles without the express consent of Congress and install a cap on the number of conversions to the frozen excepted service schedule (Schedule C), with the cap not to exceed more than one percent of the total number of employees, whichever is greater. And to ensure transparency, the bill would require the consent of the employee and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) before transfer to an excepted service can occur, requires OPM annual reporting, and gives Congress additional oversight. H.R.1002 referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability; 26 co-sponsors. S. 399 referred to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; 17 co-sponsors.

Virginia

None of the four issues on the 2024 Virginia Legislative plan went anywhere in this session of the General Assembly. The first two, Exempting a segment of CSRS pensions equivalent to Social Security Retirement and Age Deduction never materialized into introduced bills.

-Family Caregiver Tax Credit. [HB 1078 Family Caregiver](#), introduced by Delegate Sam Rasoul which creates a nonrefundable income tax credit for taxable years 2024 through 2028 was continued in the House to 2025 by voice vote.

-Nursing Home Priorities: [HB 886 Certified Nursing Facilities](#) introduced by Delegate Vivian Watts which addresses administrative sanctions, facilities subject to minimum standards, was also continued in the House to 2025 by voice vote

**Bill Ketron
Legislation**



Try These Brain Games

National Geographic Brain Games;
<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/videos/topic/brain-games>

151 Visual Phenomena and Optical Illusions with explanations by Michael Bach;
<https://michaelbach.de/ot/>



TREASURER'S REPORT

Account as of February 29, 2024
CHAPTER NUMBER 111
Roanoke Valley, Roanoke VA

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Beginning Bank balance | \$2925.39 |
| Receipts | |
| Dues collected | \$119.80 |
| Chapter Donation | \$110.00 |
| Alzheimer's (YTD \$116.00) | \$48.00 |
| 50/50 - \$25.00 | |
| Donations - \$20.00 | |
| Personal Checks passed thru not deposited | \$10.00 |
| Programs | |
| Basket | \$46.00 |
| VFN Donations | \$70.00 |
| Subtotal | \$393.80 |
| Total receipts | \$3319.19 |
| Disbursements | |
| Officer Expenses | \$0 |
| Office/Chapter Expense | \$110.00 |
| VFN Chapter Ad | |
| VFN Donations | \$70.00 |
| Program Expenses | \$0 |
| Alzheimer's | \$48.00 |
| Speaker's Lunch | \$42.70 |
| Newsletter | \$100.04 |
| Subtotal | \$370.74 |
| Total disbursements | \$370.74 |
| BANK BALANCE | \$2948.45 |
| Total Obligations | \$525.00 |
| VFN Registration Reimbursement | |
| Balance on hand for use | \$2423.45 |

**Mark Fisher
Treasurer**

MARCH 2024 MEETING MINUTES

NARFE Roanoke Valley Chapter 111, Area VII, met on Friday, March 1, 2024 at Jersey Lily's restaurant. Frances Boatman, President conducted the meeting. The meeting was called to order at 11:38 a.m. with 25 people in attendance including three guests and our guest speaker. A quorum was present to conduct chapter business.

March birthdays were recognized.

Wanda Ware spoke about the meaning of the Ides of March and St. Patrick's Day. She led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Secretary's minutes for the February 2024 meeting were approved as published by acclamation.

Ellie Long, Secretary, discussed the VFN Quick Guide tri-fold brochure emailed to members last month. This publication lists all VFN websites and social media platforms. She has paper copies for those who would like one.

Mark Fisher gave the February 2024 treasurer's report.

Carolyn Tucker, 1st VP, gave the membership report. Currently there are 156 chapter members. **Welcome to new member Laura Hoar.**

Karen Simmons, 2nd VP, announced that Shannon Abell will be speaking next February. Megan Mizak, Branch Manager of the Gainsboro Library will be our guest speaker in April.

Bill Ketron gave the Legislation report.

Mark Fisher, Service Officer, has both paper and electronic copies of Be Prepared for Life's Events and offered them to new members and to those who need to update theirs.

Frances gave the President's report.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Professor Michael Bentley was our guest speaker. He presented a detailed and comprehensive talk on "The Brain, the Mind, and the Senses: How they Develop.

Brain Facts: **1.** For most brain areas, no new neurons are made after birth – but some areas do grow new ones. **2.** The brain is the fattest bodily organ, at least 60% fat. **3.** The brain is our most complex organ. If laid flat, the surface of the cerebrum would cover 3 square feet. **4.** Humans typically have 70,000 thoughts each day. **5.** As we age our brains shrink and lose mass. **6.** An average human brain weighs ~3 pounds (1.4 kg). **7.** The brain is 75 percent water. **8.** The number of synapses in the brain (~1015) is tens of thousands of times larger than the number of seconds that you can expect to live (~3×10⁹). **9.** While awake, the brain generates up to 25 watts of power – enough energy to power a light bulb. **10.** Children who learn two languages before age 5 alter their brain structure and have denser gray matter as adults.

Three parted brain: Evolution changes structures over vast times scales. *Lizard Brain* (Brain stem and cerebellum) Autopilot, fight or flight. (Survival). *Mammal Brain* (Limbic System) emotions, memories, habits, attachments. (Emotional). Human Brain (Neo-cortex) language, abstract thought, imagination, consciousness, reasoning, rationalizing. (Logical).

The Mid Brain Location: above the hind brain. Function: integrates sensory information. Examples: Handles all sensory information passing between spinal cord and forebrain. Also involved in body movement related to auditory & visual signals.

The Hind Brain Location: base of skull. *Cerebellum:* posture, balance, voluntary movement. *Medulla:* breathing, heart rate, reflexes. *Pons:* bridges spinal cord and brain.

The Limbic system The triune brain combines inputs from external & internal environments to control internal environment. Integrated by hypothalamus & limbic nuclei of thalamus. Amygdala important for emotional evaluation & learning. Hippocampus important for learning & memory.

Other structures of the brain The pituitary gland is connected to hypothalamus by a stalk. Hypothalamus controls its function to control hormone levels involved in functions like reproduction, growth, thirst and stress levels.

The Cerebellum: •Motor control • Gets sensory inputs from all over body, associates that input with motor output patterns making movements smooth and automatic • Damage to cerebellum makes movements slow & clumsy (ataxia, apraxia), & can disturb balance • Role in cognition and emotion debated.

The Mind: The mind is to the brain as the music is to the piano that makes it. The nervous system processes information that responds to changes in the environment (and in the body) into neural impulses that represent our relation to the environment. The mind is the seat of consciousness, which is experienced as a flow of information. The mind is 'fed' by the senses. Scientists have identified 21 but think there are many more. The senses have amazing abilities, but their "bandwidth" is limited. Senses evolved to provide data for a mental *proximity* of external reality. We're wired to *interpret and act to survive* and *thrive* in our environment.

The 50/50 (Alzheimer's Fund) drawing was won by Wanda Ware. The gift basket drawing was won by Bill Ketron.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:57 PM.

Ellie Long
Secretary



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

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**NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED
FEDERAL EMPLOYEES
ROANOKE VALLEY CHAPTER 111
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ROANOKE VA 24027-2703**

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

2024 COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Alzheimer's | Phyllis Scruggs |
| Sergeant at Arms | Anne Cepeda |
| Chaplain | Wanda Ware |
| Historian | Ellie Long |
| Internet Coordinator | Ellie Long |
| Legislative | Bill Ketron |
| Membership | Carolyn Tucker |
| Newsletter Editor | Ellie Long |
| Outreach | Bud Rawlins |
| Programs | Karen Simmons |
| Public Relations Officer | vacant |
| Service Officer | Mark Fisher (540) 772-0984 |

NEXT NARFE MEETING

Friday, April 5, 2024

**JERSEY LILY'S
1650 Braeburn Drive
Salem, VA 24153**

**Gathering at 11:15 a.m.
Meeting at 11:30 a.m.**

SPEAKER

**Megan Mizak, MSLS
Branch Manager
Gainsboro Branch Library**

TOPIC

**Jim Crow and Southern Libraries:
The Story of the Gainsboro Branch
Library**