



NARFE Chapter 1116 Newsletter

Vienna-Oakton Chapter 1116
1708 Palm Springs Drive
Vienna, VA 22182-2330

SEPTEMBER 2024

Next Chapter Meeting
Tuesday, September 10, 2024
Vienna Community Center (VCC)
1:00 PM
120 Cherry Street, SE
Vienna, VA 22180

Next Board Meeting
September 26 – VCC
1:00 PM

2024 Board

Chapter Officers

President
Kathy Arpa 703-205-9041
mkarpa@hotmail.com

Vice President & Programs
Ralph Dantine 703-938-9757

2nd Vice President &
Membership
Jayne Seidman 703-938-2274

Secretary
Nancy Burke-Sanow
703-869-4799

Treasurer
David Graf 703-938-2962

Board Members

Alzheimer's & Photographer
Mark Arpa 703-205-9041

Hostess Jayne Seidman
703-938-2274

National Legislation
Jim Hathaway 703-255-7135

State Legislation
Chris Gieseler 703-849-0008

Newsletter Team
Kathy Arpa, Dave Graf

Public Relations
Pec Chan 703-930-3596

Service Officer
Susan Larson 703-915-2566

Sunshine
Harriet Epstein 703-560-4137

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – KATHY ARPA

Where did the summer go? It seems like just yesterday we were planning our 55th anniversary celebration in June and here it is September. There is a lot going on this month. We have our regular Chapter Meeting on September 10 where you will get some tips on how to organize your home, and on Saturday, September 14th there will be an important NARFE event at the Vienna Community Center with special guests including U.S. Representative Gerry Connolly (D-11), NARFE National President William Shackelford and NARFE VP for Policy & Programs John Hatton. Registration is requested for the September 14th event. See details on page 2. Beginning on page 5, you can read about our very successful 55th anniversary celebration.

It is time to elect the National officers for **NARFE** and vote on amendments. If you did not receive a ballot on email, you can use the ballot in the September NARFE magazine, which has your unique PIN number. Since there are four candidates for President, preferential voting applies which means you must rank all choices, first, second, third, etc. Deadline is September 30.

Kathy

TREASURER'S REPORT - DAVE GRAF

This report covers all transactions that have occurred since the June Newsletter. During this period, the Chapter received \$247.88 for membership dues collected by NARFE's National Headquarters for May and June. In addition, I received \$20.00 for Chapter dues from Harriet Epstein for herself and her son Marshall. An additional \$300.00 was deposited from members and guests who registered to attend the Chapter's 55th Anniversary Celebration on June 11, 2024.

The only expenses were to Mulligan's Pub on the Green Restaurant for the Anniversary Celebration. Besides the \$250.00 deposit that was previously paid, \$1,235.00 was paid for the lunch buffet for 35 attendees, various incidental charges, and gratuity. The net cost to the Chapter was \$465.00, which was within the amount that had been approved in the Chapter's Budget.

\$80.00 was received for Alzheimer's Research at the Anniversary Celebration. This donation was sent to the VFN Coordinator for the NARFE Alzheimer's Research Fund. The total contribution for this year is \$740.00.

COMING UP

Tuesday, September 10 – Chapter Meeting – VCC -- 1 PM -- Guest speaker Jennifer Gittins-Harfst, a certified Professional Organizer, will deliver a presentation entitled “Organizing for Seniors”. Attendees will learn how to realistically bring order to their home, receive tips for getting organized and for maintaining progress, and learn about specialized resources for disposing of items. Afterward, attendees will be motivated (and better positioned) to organize, simplify, and enhance their lives! She has been assisting one of our members. Come and hear how she can help YOU.

Saturday, September 14 – Northern Virginia NARFE Event – VCC – 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. * See below.

Tuesday, October 15 - Chapter Meeting – VCC -- 1 PM – Guest speaker Deborah Brown, Virginia State Legislation Chair, will discuss the 2025 Virginia State Legislation Plan. **NOTE: this is the third Tuesday in October.**

November 12 – Chapter Meeting - 1 PM - VCC – A representative from Blue Cross/Blue Shield will provide health insurance changes for 2025, including the separation of Postal employees and retirees to the new Postal-only plans.

December 10 – Chapter Annual Holiday Party – Location TBD

- **NORTHERN VIRGINIA NARFE EVENT – SATURDAY, SEPT3MBER 14, 2024**

The Northern Virginia NARFE Chapters are hosting a special event on Saturday, September 14, 2024, at the Vienna Community Center, 1:30-3:30 p.m. In addition to a wonderful networking opportunity and delicious snacks, it is a wonderful opportunity to meet Northern Virginia Chapter and Virginia Federation leaders and learn more about the programs offered and legislative activities and how they might affect you. Come and meet Congressman Connolly and National President Bill Shackelford (pictured here at our 55th anniversary celebration) and some of your Chapter 1116 members and other NARFE members in the local area. Bring a friend who is a federal or postal employee or retiree who is not a chapter member or NARFE member.



Reservations are recommended to ensure adequate seating and refreshments but are not required. To register, contact Arlington Chapter Secretary Nancy Palmerino, nancyolive0110@yahoo.com no later than Monday, September 9.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT – JAYNE SEIDMAN

As of September 1, 2024, the membership for Chapter 1116 was as follows: Total Chapter members 160, Total National Members in Chapter Area 138, Grand Total = 298. We welcome our new members Marshall Epstein, Tyrone Cabalu and Hadi Alsegaf.

NARFE kicked off the annual Fall Membership Drive on September 1, and the program will run through December 31, 2024. Current members can earn \$10 for each new member they recruit, as well as other prizes. Be sure to include your member number (found on your NARFE magazine mailing label) on the application.

SUNSHINE REPORT – HARRIET EPSTEIN

Shirley Martin celebrated her 99th birthday with family and friends on July 2. It was good to see Shirley at the Chapter’s 55th anniversary celebration. Adrian Van Huizen celebrated his 103rd birthday on August 31. We sent get well wishes to our VFN President Frances Boatman who was ill for several weeks. I hope that everyone else is well and enjoying the summer, despite the record-breaking temperatures. If you know of someone who needs a little sunshine, please call me on 703-560-4137.

LEGISLATION REPORTS

NATIONAL LEGISLATION REPORT– JIM HATHAWAY

Update on the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82)

The Act would abolish two tax provisions that reduce retirement benefits for certain government retirees and workers. The windfall elimination provision (WEP) reduces Social Security benefits for retired federal, state, and local government workers who worked in both the private sector and at a government job where Social Security is not part of their retirement income, such as the Civil Service Retirement System. The government pension offset (GPO) reduces or eliminates spousal and survivor Social Security benefits by up to two-thirds of the government retiree's annuity.

The Act was introduced last year by Representatives Abigail Spanberger, D-Va., and Garrett Graves, R-La. According to the lawmakers, the WEP reduces the Social Security benefits of roughly two million former government workers, while the GPO reduces or eliminates the Social Security benefits of nearly 800,000 retirees.

Despite widespread dissatisfaction with the two provisions, the measure has never made it to the House floor for a vote. As of August 26, the bill had 325 cosponsors in the House, well more than a majority. A Senate counterpart measure (S-597) has 53 cosponsors, also a majority.

In a statement on August 26th, Spanberger and Graves announced that when Congress returns from recess, they will file a discharge petition to force a floor vote on the bill. In order to be successful, a discharge petition requires the signatures of at least 218 lawmakers.

OPM and Congress Clash Over Future of Remote Work for Feds

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has just rolled out new guidance on remote work for federal employees, and it is causing quite a stir. This new guidance is all about flexibility and tailoring work arrangements to fit the needs of different agencies. But not everyone is on board with this approach.

The Back to Work Act of 2024 was introduced by Senators Mitt Romney and Joe Manchin. This bipartisan bill is pushing for a more traditional work setup, limiting telework to just 40% of workdays per pay period. The idea is to get federal employees back in the office to boost productivity, make better use of office space, and support local businesses that rely on office workers.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported that in 2023, 17 out of 24 federal agency headquarters were operating at about 25% less capacity than before the pandemic. Supporters of the bill argue that too much telework is wasting taxpayer money and reducing employee engagement with the public. They believe that returning to pre-pandemic work arrangements will improve productivity and accountability.

So, it is a bit of a showdown between those who want to embrace the new normal of flexible work and those who think it is time to get back to the office.

In addition, recently it has been suggested that for employees who only telework, their locality pay should be based on where they work rather than where their office is located. This could reduce some employee's salary if they live and work outside the geographic boundaries of their locality pay area.

VIRGINIA STATE LEGISLATION REPORT – CHRIS GIESELER

Virginia General Assembly

The Virginia General Assembly continued its 2024 Special Session I. Once the Commonwealth determined that it had received higher revenues than were originally estimated, the General Assembly quickly passed legislation, subsequently signed by Governor Youngkin, that makes educational grants available to certain college students. Students who apply may receive approximately \$5,100 per student + an additional \$7,500 for students at Historical Black Colleges and Universities. The legislation also provides additional funding to educational initiatives and institutions of higher learning. The legislation (HB 6004 and SB 6012) increased the Commonwealth’s budget for the current fiscal year and the next fiscal year by \$202 million and \$203 million, respectively. My concern with this legislation is that it uses revenues that might otherwise be available to fund some of the legislative initiatives that the Virginia Federation of NARFE (VFN) has included in the (still draft) VFN State Legislative Plan for 2025 (the Plan), discussed further below.

VFN State Legislative Plan for 2025

I rejoined the VFN Legislative Team. The team is headed by Deborah Brown, VFN’s State Legislative Chair. Two Zoom meetings were held this summer to decide which issues to include in a draft State Legislative Plan for 2025 and to determine which Legislative Team members would draft those issues. A new issue has been added to the Plan: urging the Commonwealth to maintain the higher state standard deduction that is scheduled to end after December 31, 2025. [For 2024 and 2025, the standard deduction is \$8,500 for a single taxpayer, and \$17,000 joint filers; in 2026, the standard deduction will revert to \$3,000 and \$6,000, respectively.] I worked on the perennial issue of having CSRS retirement benefits partially exempted from state income tax, comparable to the tax treatment that FERS retirees receive given that their social security benefits are exempt from Virginia income taxes. The remaining issues in the 2025 Plan are similar to those in the 2024 VFN Legislative Plan.

VFN President Frances Boatman participated in both Zoom meetings of the Team and was agreeable to the legislative issues that the Team proposed. By early August 2024, the Legislative Team members had drafted their issue papers (and some talking points in support) and submitted them to Ms. Brown. Using the issue papers, she will pull the draft Plan together and assemble the Plan in its “trifold” format, then circulate it to the Team members for their comments. Once finalized, the draft Plan will be submitted to the VFN Board of Directors for approval. As reported on page 2, State Legislation Chair Deborah Brown is the scheduled guest speaker for Chapter 1116’s October 15th Chapter meeting.



VFN HAS A NEW SERVICE OFFICER

Larry McIlwee (pictured here) is the new Service Officer for the VFN. Larry recently served as the VFN’s First Vice President. You can contact him at 804-450-3919.

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

September is National Preparedness Month, an ideal time to ensure that you and your loved ones are ready for any emergency. One of the best ways to start is by gathering as a household to discuss plans for several types of emergencies. For instance, decide on a safe meeting place outside the home in case of a fire. During a tornado watch or warning, discuss the safest area in your home and ensure that everyone, especially those with mobility challenges, can reach it. In the case of thunderstorms, make sure everyone knows to go inside if they hear thunder or see lightning. Regardless of the type of emergency, creating an emergency kit is essential, and it should be inclusive to meet everyone’s specific needs. For those with mobility challenges, consider adding items like a wheelchair or walker repair kit, medications, and any specialized equipment they may require. Individual needs may vary, so think about what items are essential for each person in your household on a day-to-day basis, such as medications, glasses, or communication devices. Keep your cell phone charged up and make sure you have a charger for your car in case you have no power at home. By planning and preparing now, you can help ensure the safety of everyone in your household during a crisis. To learn more about the importance of emergency planning and how to start or improve your own plan, visit FairfaxCounty.gov/emergency/readyfairfax/makeanemergencyplan.

REPORT OF JUNE 11TH MEETING/55th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

June 11th was a beautiful day with lots of sunshine as we all arrived at Mulligan's Pub on the Green in Fairfax, VA to celebrate our Chapter's 55th anniversary on the outside deck. A social hour/cash bar began at 11:30 a.m. followed by a delicious bountiful buffet luncheon and a large variety of desserts provided by our Board.

The first recorded meeting of Chapter 1116 (Vienna) was on May 21, 1969. The charter was signed on June 3, 1969. The name was changed from "Vienna" to "Vienna-Oakton" in September 2005. Twenty members have served as President of the Chapter (some were elected multiple times). Four of the past/current Presidents continue to be members of our Chapter.



Thirty-five members and guests attended the event, including representatives from six area chapters. Special guests included Congressman Gerry Connolly and his Deputy Director Maddy White; Bill Shackelford, President of NARFE; Donna Shackelford, Alzheimer's Chair for the Virginia Federation; Frances Boatman, President of the Virginia Federation; and Pat Wolfe, 2nd Vice President of the Virginia Federation.

Pictured left to right – Donna Shackelford, Bill Shackelford, Pat Wolfe, Congressman Connolly, and Frances Boatman.

Also attending were Jim Little, incoming Treasurer of the Virginia Federation, Doris McAdams, incoming Secretary of the Virginia Federation, Ted Pasek, Area X Vice President, Carol Campbell, Area IX Vice President, Pat Myers and Nancy Palmerino from Chapter 7 Arlington, Leslie and Rich Ravenell from Chapter 585 Colonial Beach, Naomi Fauntleroy from Chapter 893 Springfield as well as many other friends of the chapter members.

Congressman Connolly presented the citation that was published in the Congressional Record of the 118th Congress. Other recognitions were received from NARFE Region X Vice President Robert Allen, NARFE President Bill Shackelford and VFN President Boatman. Anniversary awards were given to Kathy Arpa 20 years, Stella Gieseler 22 years, Harriet Epstein 22 years, Curtis Turnbow 27 years and Shirley Martin 36 years. Special awards for outstanding service to the chapter were given to Ralph Dantine, Dave Graf, and Jayne Seidman. Members enjoyed the door prizes and several members won at the 50/50 raffle. The event lasted 2 ½ hours and was enjoyed by all attendees. Thanks to everyone who helped make this event a success. A special tribute was given to Shirley Martin who celebrated her 99th birthday on July 2nd. (pictured here with Kathy Arpa and Dave Graf),



Scenes from Chapter 1116's 55th Anniversary Celebration –
June 11, 2024



Curtis Turnbow receiving his award



Ralph Dantine and Jayne Seidman



<<Kathy Arpa, Chapter President
Frances Boatman, VFN President>>

