



ANNANDALE CHAPTER NEWS

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association Chapter 1159 (Annandale)

P.O. Box 1463, Annandale, VA 22003

Serving Current, Former & Retired Federal Employees and Spouses
and Survivor Annuitants

Like us on Facebook at NARFE-Annandale 1159

Find us on the web at: www.narfe.org/chapter1159

We meet at the Mason District Governmental Center
6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale, Virginia

September 2024

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 2, 2024 at 10:00 A.M.

Join us on Wednesday, October 2nd when Roy Wagner will present “A Day in the Tech Life.” For details, as well as information on registering for the Zoom meeting, see page 4. Also, please remember, our Membership Meetings have returned to the Mason District Governmental Center (6507 Columbia Pike in Annandale).

PREZ SEZ -- The subject of this *Prez Sez* is Volunteering and Nagging. Nagging is repetitious behavior in the form of pestering, hectoring, harassing, etc. The word is derived from the Scandinavian *nagga*, which means "to gnaw". I try hard to not be a nag in my life. I hate being nagged so I get it. And I certainly don't want to be a “gnawer”! But getting volunteers in any organization these days is a tough job. **John Bankson** has been our faithful volunteer seeker for many years. **Frank Walinsky** has been actively seeking a volunteer to take over her position as Secretary. The Chapter must have a Secretary to continue going.

People volunteer for all kinds of reasons and often for reasons which will also benefit them – an organization, a new interest, giving structure to their time, etc - as much as to benefit others. Much like we care for our loved ones, we seek to support our community when it is in need. However, the benefits of extending empathy are not limited to others – they can have a profound impact on your health as well!

(Prez Sez continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

As explored in the article *Why Giving Is Good for Your Health*, from the Cleveland Clinic and in the research paper *Altruism, Happiness, and Health* by **Stephen G. Post**, giving back has an array of positive benefits for our mental and physical health. Evidence has shown that exercising empathy secretes “feel good” hormones in the brain, including serotonin, dopamine, and oxytocin (*Cleveland Clinic, 2020*). Studies have further shown that volunteering is associated with decreased stress-levels, lowered blood pressure, and greater overall happiness each day (*Post, 2005*). If you join a volunteer project, your body, mind, and community will thank you!

So...what’s holding you back? Do you think the task will overwhelm your life? Do you think giving a couple of hours each month would really take over your life (It’s 3-4 hours out of 720 hours in the month)? Do you think you’re in some way not capable of doing the job? To finish my “*nagga*”, please give some serious thought to helping the chapter out. Give me a call – I’d be happy to answer any questions you might have about helping the chapter out in this way. Over the years I have been doing this job, it has given me an opportunity to get to know some of our membership and the Board members better and I believe the experience has enriched my life.

Kim Rendelson, Chapter President

Chapter Secretary Needed – As mentioned in the *Prez Sez* above, we need a new chapter Secretary starting January 2025. ***In order to be compliant with NARFE requirements for chapters, we must have the secretary position filled.*** The position requires the secretary to attend Board meetings and General meetings and take notes. Then a short meeting report is prepared. The secretary has the assistance of a small recording device about the size of a cell phone to record the event. The device has a text feature similar to closed captions/subtitles that shows the words. If you would be interested in this position, **please contact the Nominating Committee Chair John Bankson at 703-256-2295.**

Inclement Weather Policy -- When Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) are closed or “virtual only” because of inclement weather on the day of a scheduled chapter meeting, the chapter meeting (both in-person and on Zoom) for that month is canceled. If the FCPS open only 2 hours late on the day of a chapter meeting, the in-person and the Zoom meeting will be held.

September Program Report – At the Chapter’s September meeting, **Ms. Rachel Noble**, MS, LPC, made a presentation on “Resilience”. Ms. Noble is a therapist, writer, and presenter who specializes in Women’s Mental Health, Chronic Pain and Medical Conditions, and Resilience & Burnout. Ms. Noble defined resilience as “the capacity to rebound from adversity, (becoming) stronger and more capable. It is a practice - something one does, rather than something one is.” It is a practice rather than an inherent trait. Building resilience involves habits that support mental and physical health, emotional well-being, healthy behaviors, optimism, effective communication, and setting healthy boundaries. Taking care of oneself is crucial for resilience, including aspects like eating well, getting healthcare, adequate sleep, and connecting with others. Assertiveness is highlighted as a key factor in boosting self-esteem and decision-making skills. Positive assertiveness involves clear communication, expressing thoughts and needs openly and honestly, standing up for oneself while respecting others, and setting healthy boundaries. To avoid communication pitfalls, remain aware of yielding to high emotion and distractions; be vigilant about one’s own and others body language; and thoughtfully choose words and display feelings. Fear can be normal when it serves to keep you safe. Too much fear can be intrusive and paralyzing, and rule one’s life. It can result in anxiety that makes it difficult to relax or to not constantly worry, leaving one easily annoyed or irritable. It is therefore important to recognize and address anxiety and mood-related issues, and seek help from primary care doctors, mental healthcare providers, support groups, trusted friends, or hotlines. It is okay to not be okay. One can be brave not because the fear is gone, but because one finds a purpose in life that is more important than fear. Resilience is the practice of running a marathon, not a sprint, in pursuit of that purpose.

A total of **37 attended (26 in-person and 11 on Zoom)**. Snacks were provided by: **Kim Rendelson, Mary Ann Munley, Fran Walinsky, Pat Jack, Frank Toth, John Bankson, Della Dahl, Loretta Nester, Ed Reniker, and Sharon Sellers**. Snacks not enjoyed during our meeting were provided to the Mason District Police and Supervisor Andres Jimenez's staff. A special thanks to **John Bankson** (powdered cream) and **Mary Ann Munley** (coffee) for donating to the Hospitality supplies. *This article was compiled from a summary provided by Adobe’s Artificial Intelligence tool and the presenter’s slides.*

Fran Walinsky, Secretary

A Few Details for Our October 2nd Meeting – On Wednesday, October 2nd, we will meet at 10:00 a.m. in the Main Community Room of the Mason District Governmental Center (straight back as you enter the Center’s lobby), located at 6507 Columbia Pike in Annandale. Our meeting will be a hybrid meeting with an in-person presentation by **Roy Wagner** entitled “A Day in the Tech Life.” Roy will discuss how he uses his mobile devices in a typical day and compare it with life before those devices. He will talk about using his mobile phone and tablet through the day, describing how technology enhances his day from wake-up to goodnight. His routine includes diverse devices simplifying and automating routine daily tasks and activities. This isn't a technical presentation; it highlights easily available and relatively affordable consumer choices. Most people don't need them all but most people can benefit from many of them. Roy uses Apple devices and services; other vendors and technologies offer equivalent options so this is a general presentation relevant to everyone. Roy's a long-time volunteer and officer in the local Apple club, www.wap.org. To attend the meeting on Zoom, let **Doug Jones** know (doujones500@verizon.net or **703-425-3361**) no later than **Monday, September 30th**, so he can send you the meeting link and passcode.

Alzheimer’s Report – Chapter 1159 has met its Alzheimer’s Disease (AD) Research 2024 donation goal, having received a total of **\$4,032**. With the goal met, we can concentrate on adding to that total in the next three months. Also, September is the *World Alzheimer’s Month*. Research facilities across the world will be highlighted for their AD Research projects. One research project of note is the effort to identify persons early in their lives who have a tendency toward AD.



Phil Gilliland providing his September Alzheimer’s Report

If you would like to help combat Alzheimer’s Disease, you can either make a donation at our October 2nd meeting or mail a check to: **Treasurer, NARFE Chapter 1159, P.O. Box 1463, Annandale, VA, 22003**. Please make checks payable to *NARFE Alzheimer’s Research Fund* and include *Chapter 1159* on the memo line.

Phil Gilliland, Alzheimer’s Chair

Annandale Chapter, Mason District Police and Annandale Giant Food Partners Kick-Off ACCA Fall Food Drives

– At this year's first food drive collection on September 6th, we collected a total of 1,116 pounds of food plus \$317 cash to stock the ACCA Food Pantry shelves. We are off to a very good start having exceeded last September's food collection by nearly 2%. Thank you to everyone who came out to support the first of three fall food drives benefitting those in our community needing this support. Special thanks to our host and staff, **Mike Dembowski**, Manager of Annandale Giant Food (7137 Columbia Pike), Mason District Police officers **MPO Stacy Sassano** and **Officer Michael Williams**, Fairfax County Public Safety Cadet **Zachery Kearny**, and NARFE volunteers **Doug Jones**, **Mary Lou Vroman**, **Mary Ann Munley**, **Mark Doehnert** and **Sharon Sellers**. We hope to see you at our upcoming collections at Annandale Giant Food on **Friday, October 4th** and **Friday, November 8th**, from **10:00 am to 1:00 pm**. A greeter will offer a shopping list of items most needed by these families upon entry to Giant Food. Don't forget to mark your calendars. Contact **Sharon Sellers** (Mobile: **703-915-8765**), for questions or if you need help getting your contribution to Giant Food.



Mary Lou Vroman greeting shoppers



Officer Michael Williams, Mike Dembowski (Manager of Annandale Giant Food), Fairfax County Public Safety Cadet Zachery Kearny, MPO Stacy Sassano and Mark Doehnert at the collection truck for the food donations.

PJs, Slippers, Socks and Toy Drive Begin -- Did Santa bring you new, cozy pjs,

slippers, socks and even a toy or two at Christmas? Unfortunately, not all children share these special memories. Please consider helping our Mason District Police Partners bring joy to children in our community with your donation to their annual holiday party with gifts from Santa. A basket will be available during the NARFE

Members meeting October 2nd and at the ACCA Food Drive October 4th. All sizes from infants to teens, both boys' and girls' styles, are needed. If you have time, volunteers are also needed in early December to wrap the toys. Please contact **Sharon Sellers** (Mobile: **703-915-8765**), for questions or if you want to participate. Thank you for your consideration.

September 14th Special Event -- Over 70 NARFE members from Virginia came to participate in a special event in Vienna on September 14th sponsored by the Northern Virginia Chapters of NARFE. **Congressman Gerry Connolly** led off reviewing all the legislation that is most pertinent to Feds, active and retired. The Congressman always votes for legislation which helps Feds. He spoke of the Fair Act and the Social Security Fairness Act. Both of which are to help raise the cost-of-living payment and equality with other groups pay increases. He also spoke of the cost of prescription drugs and efforts to keep the prescription costs lower and a limit for the maximum payout. Schedule F is a return to a spoils system for civil servants that had been eliminated years ago. **John Hatton, the NARFE Director of Policy and Programs** followed the Congressman. John spoke of the extensive legislation that NARFE is pursuing with legislators to convince them of their need to support certain bills. The number of constituents across the country are not always recognized by some congressional representatives. He talked about the efforts to support the many items in our favor and oppose those that are not. John mentioned no benefits have been lost since 1995. (Much thanks to NARFE of course.) **National President Bill Shackelford** followed by speaking of the many initiatives being worked on by the NARFE staff of thirty in HQ to reach members, to support and to increase membership and make the NARFE 'brand' recognizable. Technology improvements and better communication remain high on the priority list. In other words, this was a most informative meeting where it was emphasized the peril to Federal workers' pay and benefits if we do nothing. *(This article was prepared from a report provided by Fairfax Chapter Member Ted Pasek, VFN Area X Vice President.)*

Legislation Report – *Federal Budget for FY 2025*: The House and Senate

reconvened on September 9th and are only in session thru September 27th when they will recess until after the November election. The most important constitutional function of the House of Representatives is to fund the Federal Government in advance of the Fiscal Year (FY) which starts on October 1st. With so little time left in session, most likely a Continuing Resolution (CR) will be needed to avoid a government shut-down. The question is, will the CR proposed be for 90 days or longer? Will the proposed CR be “Clean”, i.e. free of any non-budget issues which could be non-starters for Senate approval? Neither party wants to accept blame for a government shutdown in this critical election year. If a CR is proposed and enacted, how long afterward will it take to finalize the FY 2025 Budget? Will the current 118th Congress pass the FY 2025 budget, or will the incoming 119th Congress be left with that task? Stay tuned.

H.R. 82, Social Security Fairness Act: On September 10th, as expected, Representatives Spanberger (VA) and Graves (LA) filed a discharge petition (*House Resolution 1410*) to attempt to finally get H.R. 82 scheduled for a House floor vote. The Discharge Petition needs 218 Representatives to sign onto the petition – as of this writing, only 172 (out of 327 H.R. 82 Bill co-sponsors) have signed the petition which includes all of our Northern Virginia Representatives. PLEASE use NARFE’s advocacy letter to say “Thank You” to your Representative for supporting the Discharge Petition. It is long overdue that all Representatives put their vote on H.R. 82 on the record – either they support repeal of the unfair Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) or they don’t. It would be awesome if the vote could be scheduled in advance of the November election, but with Congress’ attention laser focused on the government funding issues, that is wishful thinking. Hopefully the vote will occur before the end of the 118th Congress.

Federal Pay Raise 2025: The Administration has proposed an average 2% pay raise -1.7% across the board, and .3% Area Wage adjustments. Absent action from Congress to raise that percentage (which may be less than the estimated cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for federal retirees and Social Security beneficiaries and the Military’s 4.5% Pay raise), the 2% pay raise for federal employees will prevail.

H.R. 866/S. 3194, the Equal COLA Act: This Bill would provide the full COLA for Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) annuities. Currently, a FERS COLA is held at 2 percent when the COLA falls between 2% and 3%, and reduces the FERS COLA by one percentage point when COLA exceeds 3%. **(continued on page 8)**

(continued from page 7) Representative Connolly introduced this bill which currently has 60 House co-sponsors and 8 Senate co-sponsors.

H.R. 1002/S. 399, Saving the Civil Service Act: This Bill would prevent any future administration from implementing Schedule F, a statutory loophole that would reclassify civil service positions and strip away the protections that safeguard our federal workforce. NARFE is committed to ensuring that merit-based principles remain the cornerstone of our civil service system, protecting federal employees from potential political patronage. Representative Connolly and Senator Kaine introduced these Bills. Currently there are 47 Co-sponsors in the House and 17 Co-sponsors in the Senate.

Virginia Legislation: The Virginia Federation of NARFE Chapters (VFN) will soon release its 2025 State Legislative Plan. The plan will include 2 carryovers from the 2024 Plan: 1) Request the State to either eliminate or revise the Age 65+ Deduction income limitations; and, 2) Request the State to accept that a portion of a CSRS Annuity is equivalent to Social Security and as such be excluded from Virginia Taxable Income. New for 2025 is a request that the State's current "temporary" Standard Deduction be enacted into law and with inflation factors going forward.



VOTER REGISTRATION: Please make sure your voter registration is current. The November election will be one of the closest in history – every vote will be critical to the outcome.

Mary Ann Munley, Legislation Chair

NARFE Fall Membership Drive – NARFE's **Fall Membership Drive** runs through December 31, 2024. Current NARFE members can earn \$10, as well as other prizes, for each new NARFE member they recruit. (*The recruiter's ID number must be provided on the NARFE application or the online application when the new member joins – you can find your membership ID on the mailing label for your NARFE Magazine or contact **Doug Jones** for your ID number.*) Details regarding the Drive can be found at page 52 of your September *NARFE Magazine* and a Membership Application is on page 47 of the Magazine. To assist in recruiting efforts, NARFE has a wide range of resources you can use to introduce active and retired federal employees to NARFE. To access them, log in at www.narfe.org and click on *For Members*, then *Member Quick Links* and under *Officer Resources* click on *Membership Recruitment Resources*. To make sure our voices are heard by Congress we need to strive to increase membership, so please recruit a new member.

Mark your calendars and please join us on Wednesday, November 6th when we will have a presentation from a representative of BlueCross/BlueShield on changes in the FEHBP for 2025

Executive Board

President

Kim Rendelson
krendelson49@gmail.com
 703-204-0388

1st Vice President

John Bankson
johnboy1607@outlook.com
 703-256-2295

2nd Vice President

Pat Drobnek
drobp@aol.com
 703-967-3935

Treasurer

Jack Bagnulo
jbagnulo@cox.net

Secretary

Fran Walinsky
walin5@aol.com

Legislation

Mary Ann Munley
mamunley@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor

Doug Jones
doujones500@verizon.net

Alzheimer's

Phil Gilliland
pmgilliland@outlook.com

Hospitality

Sharon Sellers
 703-915-8765

Membership

Doug Jones
doujones500@verizon.net
 703-425-3361

Programs

Gabe Goldberg
NARFE@gabegold.com

Web Coordinator

John Bankson
johnboy1607@outlook.com
 703-256-2295

Service Officer

Carol Lutz
 703-916-8546

Greeter

Mara Yachnin

Outreach

Rosemary Arnolts
 703-578-7619

At-Large Board Members

Pat Jack
 Mary Lou Vroman

Please remember we now meet in the Mason District Governmental Center (6507 Columbia Pike in Annandale). And don't forget our Food Drive with drop offs at our October 2nd Chapter meeting and in front of the Annandale Giant Food on September 4th.