

# NARFE

FEDERAL BENEFITS EXPERTS

*Reaching Out*

*September 2024*

*Arlington, VA Chapter 7*

## 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*

*Pat Meyers*

How quickly the summer has passed! I will miss the long summer days but look forward to cooler weather and bright fall foliage. I hope you all enjoyed your summer break and are looking forward to reconnecting with chapter members this fall. There are exciting times ahead. Read on.

Our **September 11th** program will be presented by Anthony Nunez, CEO of INF Care, a local company formed to help older adults live longer, healthier, more independent lives. His presentation will focus on the importance of proactively tackling issues that impact your independence. He'll discuss the technology solution INF Care has developed to make home care more accessible, affordable and more personalized to individual needs, while maintaining a level of privacy unmatched by others. He is an acting Commissioner on Aging for Arlington County and chair of the Legislative Committee. Join us to see what his group has developed.

**SAVE THIS DATE: Saturday, September 14, 2024.** I invite you all to an exciting special event hosted by the Northern Virginia NARFE chapters focused on increasing our membership This joint event will be held

at the Vienna Community Center from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. and open to all Northern Virginia members and active employees, new or already retired persons in the Federal or Postal Service who are NOT NARFE members. We are pleased to have U.S. Representative Gerry Connolly (D-11) and NARFE National President as guest speakers. See details later in this issue. We encourage you to bring a non-NARFE friend to learn the value of NARFE membership.

**YOUR VOTE COUNTS!** Online ballots to vote in NARFE's national election have been sent to NARFE members with e-mail addresses. Your ballot has your member ID and a PIN # on it. In addition, your September issue of the NARFE magazine has your ID and PIN # for those whose e-mail addresses are not on file or who prefer to vote by paper ballot. Voting opened August 21 and ballots must be received by 11:59 p.m. (ET) September 30. Information on candidates and bylaws amendments can be found at <http://www.narfe.org/2024-narfe-national-election> and in the September issue of the magazine. Every vote is important as we face challenges in the year ahead. Please vote!

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In addition, Chapter 7 will be voting for new officers this fall as well. Please consider an office and watch for details.

**Legislative Corner**

**Ed Weiler**

### **The Specter of *Schedule F* Rides Again**

Consider the following slightly redacted quote from an exhibit at a local National Park Service museum: [The new President had], "... *no qualms about downsizing employees of questionable loyalty to the Union, or the party that elected him President. By estimate, he replaced almost 90 percent of the Federal workforce...*" Any guesses as to whom this "new President" might have been? If you guessed America's most-revered President, Abraham Lincoln, you were correct. The quotation was taken from an exhibit labeled "A Swarm of Office Seekers," located in the basement of Ford's Theater in Washington, DC. Another bulleted item in this same exhibit states: "Next to the War itself, nothing required more of Lincoln's time and energies than the office seekers who invaded his White House" [in early 1861].

Since Lincoln's time, as every any school child knows (or so we hope!), Congress passed the *Pendleton Civil Service Act of 1883*, which ended the widely-maligned "spoils system," and set up a competitive Civil Service. Following Congressional passage of the *Civil Service Reform Act of 1978*, and the *Civil Service Due Process Amendment Act of 1990*, we were left with the system within which many, if not most, NARFE member-retirees spent their entire working lives.

While the above-cited reforms did indeed put an end to the spoils system, thereby institutionalizing a professional bureaucracy, not everyone is entirely happy with the results---even among Federal workers and retirees. Over the years, Civil Service reform proposals have abounded. And then of course, there is *Schedule F*, which some argue is aimed, not at reforming but ultimately emasculating the Civil Service.

In case you have forgotten the details surrounding *Schedule F*, here is a brief recap. In late 2020, then-President Trump signed an executive order that would have re-classified Federal employees working in policy-related roles into a new, excepted service, dubbed *Schedule F*. Such employees would be deemed "at-will," and as such would not enjoy any of the normal Civil Service protections. I have seen estimates that this new Schedule, if/when implemented, could involve as few as some 50,000 Federal workers. Still other estimates put this number in excess of one million.

In any event, early in the Biden Administration, the White House issued an executive order that reversed then-President Trump's previous Order, and subsequently directed the Office of Personnel Management to issue a rule (finalized on 4/4/2024) to reinforce the Civil Service protections reflected in the *Pendleton Act* and ensuing related legislation. But as we know, Executive Branch rules can be easily overturned by subsequent administrations---something that Presidential candidate Trump has invoked.

Meanwhile, going all the way back to early 2023, two identical bills (*H.R. 1002*; *S.399*) have been in the hopper that would (among other things) prevent any position created after 9/30/20 from being reclassified into an "excepted service" outside the protection of the established merit system rules without the express consent of Congress. Not surprisingly, NARFE supports both of these bills, and profiles them briefly in its "Bill Tracker" column in *NARFE Magazine*. According to *FEDWEEK.com* (8/6/2024), Congressional Democrats are planning to insert these bills later this year in upcoming floor debates over the General Government Appropriations and DOD Authorization Bills.

Although the prospect for a return of *Schedule F* is currently a partisan matter, the issue of whether we should have a strictly professional, merit-based civil service transcends today's partisan wrangles. In case you have forgotten (I confess that I had), the oath of office taken by Civil Servants (inscribed at 5 U.S. Code 3331) is a pledge of loyalty to the Constitution, **not** to any person, political party, or administration. Regardless of the outcome of the upcoming 2024 Presidential election, the added civil service protections provided by *HR 1002/S.399* are warranted.

### **September 14 Event Information**

**Pat Meyers**

ATTN: ACTIVE & RETIRED FEDERAL and POSTAL SERVICE EMPLOYEES: Want to hear how NARFE (National Active & Retired Federal Employee Association) works every day to protect your earned benefits? Then come to a special event hosted by Northern Virginia NARFE chapters on Saturday, September 14, 2024 at the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street SE, Vienna, VA. Join us from 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. for refreshments, networking and a great opportunity to meet Virginia chapter and State federation leaders to learn more about NARFE and how its programs may benefit you. We are pleased to have U.S. Representative Gerry Connolly (D-IL) and NARFE National President William Shackelford as guest speakers. Reservations requested but not required. To register, contact Nancy Palmerino at [nancyolive0110@yahoo.com](mailto:nancyolive0110@yahoo.com) by September 9. We look forward to seeing you there.

### **Election of Chapter Officers for 2025**

Terms of office for the currently elected Executive Board expire at the end of December 2024. Members willing to be nominated for the following elected officer positions for 2024 should contact Nancy Palmerino (703-243-6546) or at [nancyolive0110@yahoo.com](mailto:nancyolive0110@yahoo.com) NOT LATER THAN 1 October 2024: (1) President; (2) 1st VP for Legislation; (3) 2nd VP for Membership; (4) Secretary; and (5) Treasurer. Questions regarding these offices may be directed to Nancy or President Pat (703-578-3372) or at [pmmeyers2000@aol.com](mailto:pmmeyers2000@aol.com). Officers will be elected at the October general meeting. All nominations submitted in advance to Nancy, plus any nominations from the floor during that meeting, will be voted upon by those in attendance at the meeting. Please consider joining the Executive Board next year. As Legislative Chair, Ed Weiler, put it previously: "Running a chapter requires people. If enough members step up to the plate, Chapter 7 remains a going concern."

### **October 15 Vienna-Oakton NARFE Chapter Meeting**

The guest speaker at the Chapter 1116 (Vienna-Oakton) NARFE Meeting on Tuesday, October 15<sup>th</sup> will be Deborah Brown. Deborah is the new Virginia State Legislation Chair. Deborah will be discussing the NARFE 2025 Virginia State Legislation Plan. She will be coming up from Norfolk, so it would be nice to have a good attendance from NARFE members in Northern Virginia. The meeting will be held at the Lower Level of the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna, VA at 1:00 p.m. Reservations requested but not required. To register, contact Kathy Arpa at [mkarpa@hotmail.com](mailto:mkarpa@hotmail.com) by October 8.

### **Alzheimer's Report**

**Nancy Palmerino**

We had a highly successful June luncheon in many ways, including in contributions for Alzheimer's research. As a result of the 50/50 raffle and other donations, we received \$577. This brings the total collected to-date for 2024 to \$811. We've set a goal of \$1,500 in donations for the chapter this year. Your tax-deductible contributions are accepted at all our chapter meetings.

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## Membership Report

Nancy Palmerino

We welcome new members John Chiu and Anthony Matarazzi and look forward to seeing you at future meetings. We are saddened to report the passing of longtime members Donna Feitag, Janice Lockard and Robert Mroczek and extend our deepest sympathies to their families. We sent our condolences to Ann Collins, Past President of the VFN, on the death of her husband, and received a lovely note from her. We currently have 257 Chapter members and an additional 441 National members in our chapter area for a total of 698 Chapter and National members. Our chapter memberships include 60 1-year members, 34 2-year members, 91 3-year members, 61 dues withholding members and 11 Life members.

### Contact Information

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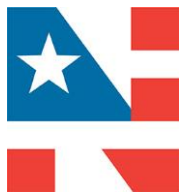
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