

Serving Current and Retired Federal Civilian Employees, Spouses and Survivor Annuitants

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The chapter membership normally meets on the first Tuesday of the month September through May with the annual chapter picnic on the first Tuesday in June. Come on out to the next meetings for informative speakers and charitable activities. At the meetings we collect books for exchanging, books for donating for sale for Alzheimer's research, food for local food banks and other charitable activities. The next meeting is:

WHEN: January 7

PROGRAM: Shawn Smith, State Director, Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP), will be talking about Medicare Frauds. This will be on the types of attempts that are made to take over your Medicare account. This is an interesting and challenging presentation.

WHERE: The American Legion Post 177, 3939 Oak St, Fairfax City

TIME: Social Hour-11:30 AM, Lunch-12:00PM, Program-12:30 followed by Chapter 737 business

COST: \$20.00

CONTACT: If you plan to attend email TedPasek@verizon.net .

February 4, 2025: Speaker from the Historical Society is invited. Not confirmed at this time.

Mar 4th Speaker TBD

Fourth Wednesday of each month: VFN Training at vanarfe.org .

April 6-9: 2025VFN Annual Meeting at Hotel Madison, Harrisonburg, Va.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear Members of Chapter 737:

Welcome to the new year. Thanks to Ted Pasek for arranging for Shawn Smith, State Director, Senior Medicare Patrol to speak at the Tuesday 7 January program meeting.

The cost of the luncheons this year will be \$20 per person. Donations for Food for Others will be welcome.

If you plan to attend the January 7th membership meeting, please inform Ted Pasek at tedpasek@verizon.net by e-mail. Making a firm reservation for the luncheon is very important.

For those who cannot attend the membership meeting in person, it will be broadcast via Zoom at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85717402521?pwd=1LuPIIS92bcVvn7iWDV8KdbN3wmQbV.1>

Please contact me if you would like to volunteer to do something for the chapter. Help is always welcome.

Sincerely yours,

Charles "Mike" Fleming – Chapter President

PROGRAM

This year we welcomed the Holiday Season with music by Brian Franke on guitar again. 12 members attended the entertainment arranged by Sharon Lenius. In addition to the musical interlude during Registration, we did a short Sing-a-Long after the lunch. Holiday Song Bingo was an idea proposed by Brian who provided the Bingo Cards with popular Christmas melodies in the number slots. Maurita Washington provided prizes for the winners and Sharon Lenius provided the tables party favors, as usual, and song sheets.

FOOD FOR OTHERS

Don't forget to bring your food donation to be taken to "Food for Others" to help those not so fortunate in Fairfax County. The Chapter delivered 109 pounds of food collected by Bob Sottile and 48 pounds collected by the chapter in December for 157 pounds total.

Needed Food Items (no more than 3 years expired, unopened, labeled, not homemade):

- Fresh fruits (oranges, apples, bananas, tomatoes, avocados, grapes, berries), juice (100% juice) 32 oz-64 oz
- Fresh vegetables (cucumbers, celery, peppers, lettuce, eggplant)

- Canned vegetables, meat (2 oz–15 oz), and fruit (in juice 11 oz–20 oz)
- Cooking Oil (ideally in cans or plastic instead of glass)
- Dry goods – cereal, pasta, rice, (16 oz packages), dried beans
- Spaghetti sauce, 14 oz – 1 lb (ideally in cans or plastic instead of glass)

Refer to the www.FoodforOthers.org/give-food website for a list of most needed items and information on the Power Pack Program (P3) that provides for food insecure children on weekends when they are out of school.

Ted Pasek – Vice President

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

(As of December 14, 2024)

National Legislative - Good news is that on Tuesday, November 12, the House of Representative's passed the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82), 327-75, legislation that would repeal Social Security's windfall elimination provision (WEP) and government pension offset (GPO) – tax provisions reducing and sometimes eliminating Social Security benefits for certain federal retirees and other public servants. The legislation is now pending in the Senate, where companion legislation has 63 cosponsors.

After the House passed it, Rep. Garret Graves, R-La., and Abigail Spanberger, D-Va, who are co-leading the legislation, urged Senate leadership to bring up the measure for a vote. On December 11, just weeks before the end of the congressional session and Democrats' control of the Senate chamber, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer told unions and federal employee groups that he will schedule a vote on the Senate floor to repeal the two controversial tax provisions that reduce some public servants' benefits.

Schumer's remarks came on a rain-soaked rally, organized by labor on Capitol Hill in support of the Social Security Fairness Act. "I'm here to tell you that the Senate is going to take action on the Social Security Fairness Act," Schumer said. "You're going to find out which Senators are with you, and which are against you. I've got all of my Democrats lined up to support it . . . and we need 15 Republicans, so let's get them, and we're going to have the vote. What's happening to you is unfair, it's un-American and I will fight it all the way." **(Government Executive)**

Not so good news is that much of the federal workforce is on edge and bracing itself for the likelihood its ranks will be purged when President-elect Donald Trump takes office.

Trump, who has derided civil servants as agents of the "deep state," promised on the campaign trail to reinstate a executive order known as new F, giving him the power to commence mass firing of nonpartisan federal employees who might spoil Trump's partisan plans. In his first term, Trump sidelined and ridiculed civil service members, silenced government offices and stifled scientific research. Many workers quit; others stuck it out, hopeful that the 2020 election would bring a new boss in the White House. **(CNN)**

Now they face another four years of Trump – a term that by his own account will be worse for the government workforce than his first. There have been lots of headlines about the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) that will be led by Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy. The duo promised to thoroughly review the current federal government apparatus to make recommendations for regulatory and spending cuts.

Musk and Ramaswamy state that if there is mass elimination of unnecessary federal regulations being dictated and overseen by federal agencies then there will be fewer federal employees needed to work in those agencies to carry out enforcement of those regulations. **(FedSmith)**

Trump's purge could be the biggest change to the federal workforce since the late 1800s, returning the federal government to the "spoils system" of 1883 when victorious political parties gave government jobs to their supporters, said Max Stier, the president and CEO of Partnership for Public Service. The spoils system was replaced by the current merit-based system where career employees serve multiple administrations, carrying out their jobs independent of politics.

Unions that represent federal employees are gearing up for the fight. The AFGE union at EPA recently finalized a contract that includes increased protections, safeguarding the science and facts career employees use to guide their work from political interference. Mass firings likely won't happen on day one. The Biden administration erected temporary roadblocks at the federal Office of Personnel Management – rules aimed at protecting federal workers from retaliatory mass firings. But Biden's rule was never codified by Congress and could easily be reversed.

In addition to Schedule F, the new administration is expected to use several other tactics to excise federal employees, such as transfers of senior executives and relocation of agency offices.

There were calls for the Biden administration to implement regulations that would have made it more difficult for a future Trump administration to relocate agency offices as a way to shed career staff, but the US Office of Personnel Management has not acted on the proposal. **(CNN)**

Virginia Legislative News- Protections for reproductive rights, marriage equality and the restoration of voting rights for some felons could be enshrined in the Virginia state constitution if measures that a committee recommended as bills are seen through to the end.

It's a long road from committee to enshrined amendment. The resolutions will need to pass the General Assembly twice as bills, with an election between votes, and then go to a ballot for voters to make the final decision. But the first steps were taken in the House on November 13.

During a meeting, the Privileges and Elections Committee advanced three separate resolutions. The committee is a 22-member committee in the Virginia House, with 12 Democrat and 10 Republican members.

The recommendations- at least one of which was bipartisan – come as the Democrat-controlled state legislature prepared for the 2025 session before a November 18th deadline for the previous session.

In Virginia, abortion is legal up until the end of the second trimester of pregnancy, around 26 weeks. Virginia is the last southern state without significant restrictions on the right to an abortion

However, Gov. Glenn Youngkin has tried to make a 15-week abortion ban a priority as recently as last August. **(NBC 4 Washington)**

Tom Hart – Legislative Program

HOLIDAY HEALTH AND SAFETY TIPS

The holidays are a time to celebrate, give thanks, and reflect. They are also a time to pay special attention to your health. Give the gift of health and safety to yourself and others by following these holiday tips.

Wash your hands often.

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.

Stay warm.

Cold temperatures can cause serious health problems, especially in infants and older adults. Stay dry, and dress warmly in several layers of loose-fitting, tightly woven clothing.

Manage stress.

The holidays don't need to take a toll on your health. Keep a check on over-commitment and over-spending. Balance work, home, and play. Get support from family and friends. Keep a relaxed and positive outlook and get proper sleep.

Travel safely.

Whether you're traveling across town or around the world, help ensure your trip is safe. Don't drink and drive, and don't let someone else drink and drive. Wear a seat belt every time you drive or ride in a motor vehicle. Always buckle your child in the car using a child safety seat, booster seat, or seat belt according to his/her height, weight, and age.

Get check-ups and vaccinations.

Exams and screenings can help find potential problems before they start. They can also help find problems early, when the chances for treatment and cure are better. Vaccinations help prevent diseases and save lives. Schedule a visit with your health care provider for a yearly exam. Ask what vaccinations and tests you should get based on your age, lifestyle, travel plans, medical history, and family health history.

Preventing injuries.

Injuries can occur anywhere and some often occur around the holidays. Use step stools instead of furniture when hanging decorations. Leave the fireworks to the professionals. Wear a bicycle helmet to help prevent head injuries. Wear a helmet when riding a bicycle or skateboarding to help prevent head injuries. Keep vaccinations up to date.

Fire Safety.

Most residential fires occur during the winter months. Keep candles away from children, pets, walkways, trees, and curtains. Never leave fireplaces, stoves, or candles unattended. Don't use generators, grills, or other gasoline- or charcoal-burning devices inside your home or garage. Install a smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector in your home. Test them once a month and replace batteries twice a year.

John & Constance Bails - Co-Service Officers

VIRGINIA FEDERATION OF NARFE (VFN) ACTIVITIES

Social Security Fairness Act The House passed WEP/GPO legislation is now waiting for Senate action. With only a few weeks before the 118th Congress ends, **NARFE is calling for its members to urge Senators to vote on WEP/GPO Repeal and to attend a rally at the U.S. Capitol.** We are asking all Virginia Federation Members (Chapter and Virginia National Members) to use NARFE's ADVOCACY website to call or write Senators Warner and Kaine (even if you have done so before) and ask them to urge Senate Leadership to bring the Social Security Fairness Act to the floor for a vote BEFORE the end of the year!

Gaston Gianni – Chair VFN National Legislation

Call for Virginia Federation of NARFE (VFN) 2025-26 Officer Nominations

These positions include the offices of President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Duties of these positions can be found in the VFN bylaws and policy handbook on the vanarfe.org website.

To be considered for a position, nominees must submit a declaration of intent, plus a brief resume/bio (about 200 words) and a headshot photo to the Nominating Committee Chair, Pat Meyers by the January 6, 2025 deadline. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor at the annual meeting in early April. If there is only one candidate for an office, they can be declared the winner by acclamation, without the need for a vote. The election will be held within 60 days of the annual meeting.

Pat's e-mail address is: pmmeyers2000/@aol.and phone number is 703-578-3372. Please contact Pat if there are questions.

Thank you for considering taking a more active role in helping the VFN continue to be a success.

Frances E. Boatman, President - Virginia Federation of NARFE

Return Service Requested
NARFE - Fairfax Chapter 737
5340 GAINSBOROUGH DR.
FAIRFAX, VA 22032-2741



Postal Service (Time Value) Please Deliver by **December 24th, 2024**

NEWSLETTER

The Fairfax Chapter 737 newsletter is published September through June to provide information on the Chapter membership meetings in those months.

Members should log on to their NARFE account and go to the membership database and update their records. Physical newsletters are coming back as undelivered and digital newsletters are bouncing back because of incorrect or obsolete addresses. It is important to get the national magazine, other NARFE benefits information and chapter newsletters so if you are not getting some of this information, go to <https://www.narfe.org/> to ensure your data is current so you get your full range of benefits.

Articles for the January issue of the NARFE Fairfax Chapter 737 newsletter are due to the editor by e-mail at Mays.JL@verizon.net by January 15.

James Mays – Newsletter Editor