



NARFE Chapter 1116 Newsletter

Vienna-Oakton Chapter 1116
2634 Skidmore Circle
Vienna, VA 22180-7121



Next Chapter Meeting
Tuesday, March 11, 2025
Vienna Community Center (VCC)
1:00 PM
120 Cherry Street, SE
Vienna, VA 22180

Next Board Meeting
Thursday, March 27, 2025
Vienna Community Center
1:00 PM

2025 Board Chapter Officers

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

1st Vice President & Programs
Ralph Dantine 703-938-9757

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

Secretary David Graf
703-938-2962

Treasurer & State Legislation
Chris Gieseler
703-849-0008

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

National Legislation
Jim Hathaway 703-255-7135

Newsletter Team
Kathy Arpa, Dave Graf

Public Relations
Pec Chan 703-930-3596

Service Officer
Vacant

Sunshine
Harriet Epstein 703-560-4137

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – KATHY ARPA

Mark and I just returned from three glorious weeks in Clearwater, Florida. We had a wonderful time down there in 70-to-80-degree temperatures most days. We visited many of our favorite restaurants in Clearwater, Dunedin and Palm Harbor and enjoyed lunch at a tiki bar at the recently opened American Legion in Madeira Beach which was completely destroyed in the two hurricanes that hit Florida last September.

Spring is around the corner, as evidenced by the return to Daylight Saving Time this coming Sunday, March 9th. You need to move your clocks forward one hour or be late! Fortunately, cell phones automatically make the time change.

The risk of inclement winter weather caused us to cancel our February Chapter Meeting as well as the February Board Meeting. Fortunately, Virginia Federation of NARFE (VFN) National Legislation Chair Gaston Gianni adjusted his schedule and will be our speaker at the March 11th Chapter Meeting. He plans to focus on NARFE's legislative priorities with Congress. Please take the time to read the National and State Legislation reports on pages 3 and 4. There is a wealth of information there.

Stay tuned for Town Hall meetings, Resource Fairs, etc. that legislators are having. Congressman Don Beyer is sponsoring a Resource Fair for Federal workers and contractors from noon – 5 PM on Saturday, March 8th. It will be held at Wakefield High School in Arlington.

The VFN Annual Meeting and Conference will occur on April 6-9 in Harrisonburg, VA. Over 125 attendees have already registered. Although advance registration is recommended, members can register at the Conference on April 6-8, and it will cost \$120. Please contact me if you have questions.

Happy St. Patrick's Day on March 17th!

Kathy

COMING UP

Saturday, March 8, 2025 – U.S. Representative Don Beyer’s Resource Fair for Federal Workers and Contractors -- Noon - 5 PM Wakefield High School 1325 Dinwiddie St. Arlington, VA 22206

Sunday, March 9, 2025 -- Daylight Savings Time starts and will end on November 2, 2025. This means that we will turn our clocks forward one hour on March 9 at 2 AM



Tuesday, March 11, 2025 – Chapter Meeting – 1:00 PM – VCC. Guest speaker – Gaston Gianni, (pictured here) VFN National Legislation Chair, who will talk about the issues that NARFE is focused on with Congress. There are plenty of issues and they change every day! He will also discuss the Social Security Fairness Act, H.R. 82, that repealed WEP/GPO after 40 years. We expect a good turnout.

April 6-9, 2025 – VFN Annual Meeting and Conference - Hotel Madison & Shenandoah Valley Conference Center, 710 S. Main St. Harrisonburg, VA. Info at www.vanarfe.org. (Also see details on page 2 of last month’s Chapter Newsletter.). Registration is now \$120.

Tuesday, April 15, 2025 – Chapter Meeting – 1:00 PM – Vienna Community Center. Guest speaker – Carolyn Pennington, Executive Director of the Shepherd’s Center of Northern Virginia. (Note this is the third Tuesday.)

MEMBERSHIP REPORT – JAYNE SEIDMAN

As of March 1, 2025, the membership for Chapter 1116 was as follows: 168 Total Chapter members, 151 Total National Members in Chapter Area, Grand Total = 319. We welcome our new chapter members Nancy Crothers, Lourdes Duca, Frederick Harley, Amy Hood, Dana Ott, Denis Symes, and Huijuan Xu, and hope to see you at a future meeting. NARFE has experienced a huge growth in new members, both current employees and retirees as reflected in the above totals. Please let friends and relatives know about the benefit of NARFE membership.

SUNSHINE REPORT – HARRIET EPSTEIN

I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to my NARFE friends who supported me during the passing of my son Marshall.

If you know of someone who needs a little sunshine, please contact me at 703-560-4137.

TREASURER’S REPORT – CHRIS GIESELER

Since January 14, 2025, Chapter Meeting (no Chapter or Board meetings occurred in February due to inclement weather in both cases), the Chapter received \$455.04 in membership dues collected by NARFE’s National Headquarters for December 2024 and January 2025.

No expenses were incurred or paid during this period.

The 50/50 drawing for Alzheimer's Research at the January 2025 Chapter meeting brought in \$34. I plan to remit that amount and any proceeds from the 50/50 drawing at the March 11, 2025 Chapter Meeting to the VFN Coordinator for the Alzheimer's Research Fund.

As reported more fully in the Chapter's February 2025 Newsletter, the Chapter's Board of Directors considered a draft of the Chapter's budget for 2025 during its January 23, 2025 meeting. After making some adjustments, the Board approved the budget for presentation to the Chapter's membership. Accordingly, copies of the Board-approved version of the Chapter's 2025 budget will be provided at the March 11, 2025 Chapter Meeting. Chapter members will be able to review, raise any questions, propose/vote on any changes to that version of the budget, and then to vote on the budget in its final form.

LEGISLATION REPORTS

NATIONAL LEGISLATION REPORT– JIM HATHAWAY

Status of Implementation of the Social Security Fairness Act, H.R. 82

SSA recipients affected by the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) laws will receive retroactive payments sooner than expected. As of March 2, 2025, the Social Security Administration (SSA) announced the immediate implementation of retroactive payments and increased monthly benefits under the Social Security Fairness Act, which repealed the WEP and GPO.

These provisions previously reduced or eliminated benefits for over 3.2 million people with pensions for work not covered by Social Security. The change will benefit groups like teachers, firefighters, police officers, and federal employees under the Civil Service Retirement System.

Retroactive payments, covering the period since January 2024, will be deposited by the end of March, while higher monthly benefits will start in April. Many NARFE members were pleasantly surprised to see big deposits in their bank accounts!

Beneficiaries will be notified of changes by mail, though payments may arrive before notice. SSA will rely on automation for most cases, while complex cases will require manual processing. Beneficiaries are advised to wait until April before inquiring about their payment amounts.

For updates, visit the Social Security Fairness Act webpage at <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/social-security-fairness-act.html>

VIRGINIA STATE LEGISLATION REPORT – CHRIS GIESELER

The Virginia General Assembly adjourned “sine die” (without an appointed date to reconvene) its 2025 Regular Session on February 22, 2025, only to reopen its 2025 Special Session the same day. (How's that for going back in time ... well, not really. More on this below.)

Regarding the 2025 Regular Session, the General Assembly passed almost 920 bills and sent or will send them to the Governor. The Governor has 30 days from the adjournment date to act on the bills that are sent to him, thus March 24, 2025, COB. He can approve or veto bills or return them to the General Assembly with his recommended amendments. The Governor also has “line-item” veto power with respect to the provisions of the Budget Bill. The General Assembly will reconvene on April 2, 2025 (“Reconvened Session”) to consider the Governor's vetoes and amendments. The legislature can accept the Governor's action or attempt to override them.

Regarding the legislation that the General Assembly did pass, the Budget Bill (HB 1600) that amends the Commonwealth's current budget, is an important one. The bill was passed by large margins in both the House of Delegates and the state Senate. The Budget Bill, in light of a budget surplus in the billions, included a number of "goodies," including increases of \$250 for single filers and \$500 for joint filers in the current standard deduction from Virginia income taxes.

Enacting legislation to maintain the current standard deduction, which was set to expire after 2025, was one of the legislative priorities of the Virginia Federation of NARFE (VFN). Without such legislation, and starting with tax year 2026, the current standard deduction amounts (\$8,500 for single filers/\$17,000 for joint filers) would have reverted to the pre-2019 levels (\$3,000/\$6,000). Thus, the General Assembly not only maintained the standard deduction amounts, as VFN had urged, but the legislature also increased those amounts, and that is a good thing.

According to media reports, some of the other goodies included in the Budget Bill are:

- State employees would get a 1.5% bonus (teachers would get \$1,000, but I do not know whether that amount is instead of, or in addition to, the 1.5% bonus).
- Taxpayers would get one-time income tax rebates (\$200 for single filers, \$400 for joint filers). One legislator estimated that the rebate checks would be distributed to taxpayers by October 15, 2025, which happens to be about three weeks before the November 4th election of Delegates to the General Assembly.
- The minimum wage would increase to \$15 an hour by 2027.
- Paid family and medical leave coverage would be expanded.
- State school divisions would be allowed to expand the number of student support positions (4,725 additional positions would be permitted statewide).

Regarding the VFN's other legislative priorities for 2025:

- Two bills, HB 2575 and SB 943, pertaining to VFN's priority regarding the exemption of a portion of Civil Service Retirement System benefits from Virginia state income tax, failed this year. Neither bill got out of their respective committees. However, there is some good news—a staff member of state Senator DeSteph, who introduced SB 943, indicated that the legislation would be brought back in 2026.
- Several bills passed that dealt with various nursing-home issues, but not necessarily the same issues that VFN had outlined in the 2025 Legislative Plan. Nevertheless, a law (HB 1446), enacted in 2023, governing nursing home staffing levels will become effective on July 1 of this year. We hope that the statute is implemented successfully.

Unsuccessful legislation from the 2025 Regular Session included (1) a bill that would have set up a casino in the Tysons area, and (2) a proposed constitutional amendment that would establish Virginia as a right-to-work state. There were many other unsuccessful bills.

The General Assembly also established a new committee, the House Emergency Committee on the Impacts of Federal Workforce and Funding Reductions. This committee met for the first time on February 22, 2025. Its purpose is to consider the impact on the Commonwealth that results from federal budget and employment reductions. By continuing the 2025 Special Session, the respective leaders of both houses can call back the legislature to the Capital within 48 hours' notice to consider legislation and budget amendments. (This maneuver is possible because the Special Session was technically never adjourned. Thus, it allows the General Assembly to reconvene without the Governor having to call the legislature back.)

I will be monitoring the fate of the bills discussed above and any legislative activities of the House Emergency Committee and will report back to the Chapter on any significant items of interest.