



# NARFE NEWS

## ROANOKE VALLEY CHAPTER 0111

### 2025 OFFICERS

<p><b>President</b>  <b>Frances Boatman</b>            (540) 774-3031  <a href="mailto:feboatman@live.com">feboatman@live.com</a></p>	<p><b>1<sup>st</sup> Vice President</b>  <b>Carolyn Tucker</b>            (540) 797-5037  <a href="mailto:cptucker1212@gmail.com">cptucker1212@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President</b>  <b>Karen Simmons</b>            (540) 525-1043  <a href="mailto:ksim285032@aol.com">ksim285032@aol.com</a></p>	<p><b>Secretary</b>  <b>Ellie Long</b>            (540) 772-0468  <a href="mailto:lalaw1986@gmail.com">lalaw1986@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>Treasurer</b>  <b>Mark Fisher</b>            (540) 772-0984  <a href="mailto:mcfisher2@cox.net">mcfisher2@cox.net</a></p>
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TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR OPM: 1-888-767-6738 (M-F, 7:40 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.)

**Websites:** NARFE: [www.narfe.org](http://www.narfe.org) FEDHub  
 Chapter 0111: <https://www.vfn.org/Chapter-111> VFN: [www.vanarfe.org](http://www.vanarfe.org)  
 VFN Facebook: [NARFE Virginia Federation | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/NARFE-Virginia-Federation/)  
 VFN National Legislation Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/vfnatleg>  
 VFN State Legislation Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/vfnvaleg>

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT



**March is NARFE-PAC month.** With the threats to our earned benefits and protections, we need the Political Action Committee more than ever. Your contributions support our advocacy mission, complement grassroots efforts and allow NARFE lobbyists to continue their work, as well as support the legislators who are working to protect you and your benefits.

**Membership Recruiting.** We currently have 162 members in our chapter, with 364 National members in our Chapter area, for a total of 526 members. Each of you should view yourself as a recruiter and if you know someone who is a Federal employee or retiree, or the spouse of a Federal employee or retiree, encourage them to join NARFE and our Roanoke Chapter 0111.

**VFN Training.** Via Zoom on Wednesday, March 26<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm - "Legislative Results from the 2025 VA General Assembly" by Deborah Brown, VFN State Legislation Chair.

**Virginia Federation's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.** Eight of our members will represent our Roanoke Valley Chapter 0111 at the 2025 Virginia Federation of NARFE's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference at Hotel Madison in Harrisonburg, VA on April 6 - 9. This year's theme is "Our Future – Stronger Together". If you would like to join us, information is on the Virginia NARFE website, [Online Registration – VFN](#). We look forward to learning how to better serve our Chapter and promote NARFE's mission.

**Spring is just around the corner!** I am sure we are all looking forward to the sunny days and warm temperatures when we can walk outside and enjoy the fresh air.

Happy St. Patrick's Day!



Frances Boatman  
 President



## LEGISLATION

### Federal

There is good news and bad news. The good news is the Social Security Administration has begun recalculating benefits for federal retirees and others who had been affected by the WEP/GPO with many to receive a one-time retroactive payment by the end of March and higher ongoing benefits beginning with those paid in April

The bad news, the House Budget Committee has approved a budget outline that would require substantial cuts including federal employee retirement and health insurance benefits. Specific proposals include:

--Requiring all FERS employees to contribute 4.4 percent of salary toward their retirement benefits.

--Ending the annuity supplement for those who retire under FERS before age 62 that is paid until they reach that age and can claim Social Security

--Basing the annuities of future retirees on the highest five consecutive salary years rather than the current three.

--Changing the premium sharing system in the FEHB to a voucher system in which the government's share would be set at a flat amount and increased at a rate lower than the growth in premiums.

**Bill Ketron  
Legislation**

### VFN 2025 Legislative Plan results:

#### Repeal of Sunset Provision for Virginia's Current Standard Deduction Amounts.

Though not repealed, the General Assembly maintained the current standard deduction amounts of \$8,500 for single filers and \$17,000 for joint filers, and increased each by \$250 and \$500 respectively for the tax year 2026. Senator David Suetterlein (R), 4<sup>th</sup> District, sponsored SB782, one of the senate bills for repeal.

#### Age 65+ Deduction

This issue recommended by the VFN was not addressed in any bills this year.

### Exempting a Segment of CSRS Pensions Equivalent to Social Security Retirement.

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.

### Nursing Home Priorities

None of the issues recommended by the VFN were addressed in any bills this year.



### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Account as of February 28, 2025  
CHAPTER NUMBER 0111  
Roanoke Valley, Roanoke VA

Beginning Bank balance **\$1303.90**

#### **Receipts**

Dues collected \$357.68

Alzheimer's (YTD \$116.64) \$41.64

50/50 - \$25.00

Donations - \$16.64

#### Programs

Basket \$36.00

Chapter Donations \$135.00

**Total receipts \$570.32**

**Subtotal \$1874.22**

#### **Disbursements**

Officer Expenses \$0

Office/Chapter Expenses \$110.00

VFN Ad

Program Expenses \$0

Alzheimer's \$41.64

Speaker's Lunch \$32.00

1<sup>st</sup> Timers and pass through \$0

Newsletter \$92.66

Postage \$21.97

**Subtotal \$298.27**

**Total disbursements \$298.27**

**BANK BALANCE \$1575.95**

**Total Obligations \$0**

**Balance on hand for use \$1575.95**

**Mark Fisher  
Treasurer**

## MARCH 2025 MEETING MINUTES

NARFE Roanoke Valley Chapter 0111, Area VII, met on Friday, March 7, 2025 at Olive Garden. Frances Boatman, President, conducted the meeting. The meeting was called to order at 12:15 p.m. with 24 people in attendance including our guest speaker. There was one new member and one guest. A quorum was present to conduct chapter business.

March birthdays were recognized.

Wanda Ware, Chaplain, discussed the meaning of St. Patrick's Day and led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Secretary's minutes for the February 2025 meeting were approved as published; motion made by Anne Cepeda, seconded by Ruth Greene. Motion approved by acclamation.

Ellie Long, Secretary, gave an update on Mark. He is home and doing well. She collected VFN Conference chapter supporter contributions and announced Chapter member Paul Swecker has received his lump sum Social Security payment! She asked if others had and several attendees raised their hands. Pat Gwathmey mentioned that those affected by the GPO portion of the WEP/GPO repeal will need to have an appointment phone conversation scheduled by SSA. **Grover Groover received the Distinguished Service Award** for 20 continuous years as a chapter member.

Frances gave the membership report. Currently, there are 162 chapter members.

Karen Simmons, 2<sup>nd</sup> VP, mentioned our April speaker is Dawn Sandoval from The Least of Us Ministry discussing Homelessness in the Roanoke Valley and our May speaker is Allen Lawrence, General Manager of the Salem Red Sox discussing Operating a Minor League Baseball Team.

Bill Ketron gave the Legislation report.

Ruth Greene, Area VII VP, reminded us it's not too late to register for the VFN conference. She asked that we bring to our April meeting gift cards or other small items for the Chapter Gift Basket that's raffled off at the Conference.

Frances gave the President's report.

Our guest speaker was Delegate Sam Rasoul (D), 38<sup>th</sup> District.

The General Assembly passed a Budget Bill (HB 1600) that amends the Commonwealth's current budget with overwhelming bi-partisan support. He hopes the Governor will sign it. If you are interested in asking for his support of the Budget Bill, you can contact the governor's office by phone at 804-786-2211 or by [email](#).

**Lowering the Cost of Utility Bills.** Since I was first elected, I have been taking on the electric monopolies that have stolen billions of dollars from ratepayers across Virginia. To address the incessant burden utility companies are putting on us, the legislature passed SB 1076 to prevent Appalachian Power from requesting rate increases until at least March 1, 2026, and restructure some costs to bring electric bills down. This will also prohibit ApCo from increasing electric rates on residential customers during the winter months.

**Prescription Drug Affordability Board.** Prescription drug costs are hurting too many Virginians. This year, the General Assembly passed HB 1724 to establish a Prescription Drug

Affordability Board. This Board will review prescription drug pricing and provide upper pay limits for certain medications. The Board will report recommendations to the General Assembly.

**More Teachers and Staff.** As Chairman of the House Education Committee, I have made it a priority to ensure we are allocating the Commonwealth's resources where it really matters. Virginia schools have been under the restriction of a cap on support staff since the Great Recession in 2008. My budget amendment passed funding to lift the school support cap and provide our schools access to hire staff by allocating \$222.9 million to fill critical roles.

**Veterans Support.** Our veterans have sacrificed immensely in service to our country, and it is our duty to support them and their families. The General Assembly has allocated an additional \$20 million for the Virginia Military Survivors & Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP), which provides education benefits for spouses and children of qualifying veterans. These families give so much to our country and these grants are Virginia's opportunity to give back and thank them for their sacrifice.

**Building our Healthcare Workforce.** Virginia is in a continuing healthcare work force-crisis. To help remedy this, I passed HB 2548 to streamline the path from Licensed Practical Nurse to Registered Nurse. Currently it is costly for our LPNs to become RNs, making it difficult to fill work force shortfalls, but with this measure, we will create a streamlined curriculum.

**House Emergency Committee on the Impacts of Federal Workforce and Funding Reductions.** Delegate Rasoul stated "...it's chaired by the two most boring House members, one a democrat, one a republican." Its purpose is to consider facts only (no drama) on the impact on the Commonwealth that results from federal budget and employment reductions. He expects they will be draconian and stated that any rainy day budget surplus will not be enough to compensate for the financial losses to the Commonwealth.

After Delegate Rasoul departed, Frances asked if she should consider recommending that the VFN-PAC make a contribution to Delegate Rasoul this year. All in attendance enthusiastically said yes.

The 50/50 (Alzheimer's Fund) drawing was won by Karen Simmons. The basket drawing was won by Frances Boatman.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:44 p.m.

**Ellie Long**  
**Secretary**



**APRIL BIRTHDAYS**

2 Bill Caudill

**NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED  
FEDERAL EMPLOYEES  
ROANOKE VALLEY CHAPTER 0111  
P O BOX 12703  
ROANOKE VA 24027-2703**

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**2025 COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS**

Alzheimer's	Phyllis Scruggs
Sergeant at Arms	Anne Cepeda
Chaplain	Wanda Ware
Historian	Ellie Long
Internet Coordinator	Ellie Long
Legislative	Bill Ketron
Membership	Carolyn Tucker
Newsletter Editor	Ellie Long
Outreach	Bud Rawlins
Programs	Karen Simmons
Public Relations Officer	vacant
Service Officer	Mark Fisher

**NEXT NARFE MEETING**

**Friday, April 4, 2025**

**Olive Garden  
925 Valley View Blvd NW  
Roanoke, VA 24012**

**Gathering at 11:15 a.m.  
Meeting at 11:30 a.m.**

**SPEAKER**

**Dawn Sandoval  
The Least of Us Ministry**

**TOPIC**

**Helping the Homeless  
in the Roanoke Valley**