



NARFE CHAPTER 1116 (VIENNA-OAKTON) NEWSLETTER

2634 Skidmore Circle
Vienna, VA 22180-7121

MAY 2025

Next Chapter Meeting
Tuesday, May 13, 2025
Vienna Community Center (VCC)
1:00 PM
120 Cherry Street, SE
Vienna, VA 22180

Next Board Meeting
Thursday, May 22, 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 Dantinne 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

The VFN 70th Annual Meeting and Conference is history. There were 130 members and guests in attendance including 31 “first-timers and new members.” That is a record. Our Chapter 1116 member Chris Gieseler was one of those attending for the first time. Guest speakers from NARFE Headquarters included NARFE National President Bill Shackelford; John Hatton, Staff Vice President Policy and Programs; and Jennifer Raphael, Senior Director Communications and Technology. Also attending was Region X Vice President Robert Allen. Other speakers were Shawn Smith, Director of the Virginia Senior Medicare Patrol and Dr. Edna Reid, retired FBI Intelligence Analyst. There were a variety of workshops. I presented the workshop for “first-timers and new members.” There was standing room only. It was good to meet the new members and first-timers who are already involved in their chapters. The Conference included the Memorial Service and Election of Officers. [See names of candidates for President and 1st Vice President on **page 6.**] There was time for some fun too with the first annual karaoke night following the welcome reception on Monday night and dancing to a DJ following the installation of officers and banquet on Tuesday night. The 2026 VFN Conference will be held at the same location next year in Harrisonburg, VA on April 12-15, 2026.

Our April 15th meeting drew a good crowd with Carolyn Pennington, Executive Director of the local Shepherd Center as our speaker. See report on pages 2-3. Our May meeting coming up next week will feature Linda Colbert, Mayor of Vienna, and the annual Ice Cream Social. Hope to see you there. See the article on page 2 about the annual picnic in June.

Kathy

MEMBERSHIP REPORT – JAYNE SEIDMAN

As of May 1, 2025, the membership for Chapter 1116 was as follows: 169 Total Chapter members, 153 Total National Members in Chapter Area, Grand Total = 322. We welcome our new members Karen Kolakowski and Kim Carroll to our chapter. We hope to see them at a Chapter Meeting soon. Encourage your friends and relatives who are current and former federal employees to join NARFE.

COMING UP

Tuesday, May 13 – Chapter Meeting – 1:00 PM – Vienna Community Center – Guest speaker Vienna Mayor Linda Colbert and annual ice cream social.

June 9 – 11 - LEGCON25 – NARFE's 2025 Legislative Virtual Training Conference

Tuesday, June 10 – Annual Chapter Picnic - 11:30 a.m. (See details below.)

October 20-24 – Region X Conference – Staybridge Suites, Pigeon Forge, TN - Watch for details.

ANNUAL CHAPTER 1116 PICNIC



Like prior years, Chapter 1116 members will get together for a picnic at the Oakton, VA home of 2nd Vice President Jayne Seidman on **Tuesday, June 10 beginning at 11:30 am**. Depending on the weather, we will either use Jayne's outdoor patio or be indoors. The Chapter will provide fried and baked chicken and beverages (lemonade, iced tea, and water). Each member and guest may either bring a dish to share (such as a salad, vegetable, or dessert) or give a \$10.00 donation. A sign-up sheet will be passed around at the May Chapter Meeting. If you do not attend the May meeting and want to attend the picnic, please call **David Graf on 703-938-2962** no later than **Sunday, June 8**, to sign up and indicate what you will bring to the picnic. All members *and guests* are welcome!

Directions from Tysons Corner/Vienna: Take Maple Ave./Route 123 South. Turn **right** onto Hunter Mill Road (VA 624) -- go 0.6 miles. Turn **left** on Marbury Rd. -- go 0.3 miles. Take **1st left** on Hunting Hills Court -- go 0.1 miles. Take **1st left** on Hunting Hills Place -- go 0.09 miles. Jayne's house number is **10500 Hunting Hills Place - on the left**. Parking is available in the driveway and on both sides of the street. GPS works great.

REPORT ON APRIL 15TH CHAPTER MEETING – DAVE GRAF

President Kathy Arpa called the Chapter Meeting to order at 1:06 pm on April 15, 2025, at the Vienna Community Center (VCC). Bill Inch led the Pledge of Allegiance. Kathy welcomed guests and new members.

Programs Chair Ralph Dantine introduced the guest speaker, Carolyn Pennington. She is the Executive Director of the Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia (SCNOVA). The non-profit organization of volunteers provide numerous services and supports for older adults aged 50 and above to enable "Healthy Aging". The first Shepherd's Center was established in Kansas City, Missouri by a United Methodist preacher. Today there are 55 Centers in 17 states. SCNOVA was created in 1998 and originally served older adults in the Oakton and Vienna areas only. A few years ago, it expanded to include Reston, Herndon, and Great Falls. The main services are:

- Medical and non-medical transportation. Last year 2,900 one-way rides were provided, most of which traveled less than eight miles.
- Handy Helpers who perform small tasks in and around the house, including computer help/assistance.
- Care Givers Support Group.
- Adventure in Learning lectures.
- An Active Wellness Program.

Funds to cover operating expenses are raised from the annual Pickleball and Golf Festival, quarterly Lunch N' Life events, Bingo Nites at Vienna's Foster's Grille, and grants. The SCNOVA office is at the Baptist Church on Marshall Road in

Vienna. The office can be contacted at **703-281-0538** or via the www.scnova.com website. The presentation ended with a Q&A session. Upcoming activities of the Shepherd Center include:

- June 16, 2025, 4:00pm -6:00pm - **Bingo Night at Foster's Grille** - Vienna, VA, \$10 for 10 games (138A Maple Ave. Vienna Va, 22180)
- July 22, 2025), 12:00pm -2:00pm - **Appraisal Road Show Lunch N Life**, St. John Neumann Catholic Church, (11900 Lawyers Rd, Reston VA, \$20 - Sponsored by Hunters Woods at Trails Edge

Following the break, Kathy called the Business Meeting to order at 2:12 pm. Secretary Dave Graf read the minutes of the March Chapter Meeting. Treasurer Chris Gieseler gave the Treasurer and State legislation reports. Updated information about the State Legislature's April 2nd "Reconvene Session" and the Governor's subsequent actions are in this Newsletter on Pages 5-6. Kathy gave Jayne Seidman's report that the Chapter had 168 Chapter members and 152 National members for a total of 320 NARFE members in our area.

National Legislation Chair Jim Hathaway gave the National Legislation Report which focused on:

- Congressional legislation updates on three bills that would affect personnel policy (the Saving the Civil Service Act), compensation for employees and the Equal COLA Act for FERS retirees.
- A Budget Blueprint has been passed by the Congress. It is silent on a January employee pay raise (there may not be a raise or a 1% nominal raise). The Blueprint also calls for \$50 Billion in cuts over 10 years to federal pay, retirement benefits and health insurance.

Upon conclusion of the report, members sang Happy Birthday to Jim.

Sunshine Chair Harriet Epstein asked members to contact her when someone needs a little sunshine. Programs Chair Ralph Dantine announced that the candidates for VFN President and 1st Vice President would speak at the Caucus Meeting of the Northern Virginia chapters on April 25th. Ralph also stated that Vienna Mayor Linda Colbert will be the guest speaker at the May Chapter meeting. The annual Ice Cream Social will also be held at that meeting. The June meeting will be the annual Chapter Picnic.

Margaret Murphy volunteered to chair the Ice Cream Social at the May Chapter meeting. The Chapter will provide ice cream. A sign-up sheet for volunteers to bring toppings and to be scoopers was circulated.

Chris and Kathy reported on the VFN Annual Meeting and Conference that was held in Harrisonburg, VA on April 6-9th. Mark Arpa was the Photographer. There were 130 attendees, including some who recently joined NARFE and were National members. Kathy reported on the election of officers for the VFN for the next year beginning July 1, 2025. The only contested elections are for President and 1st Vice President. All Virginia NARFE members with an email registered with NARFE Headquarters will receive an Election Ballot via email by the end of May. The ballot will also contain two proposed By-Laws amendments. *[See photos of the candidates on **page 6** and candidate statements are on the VFN website under www.vanarfe.org/election.]*

Kathy stated that Virginia Congressman Don Beyer was hosting another Job Fair for Federal Workers and Contractors on May 5th at the George Washington Middle School, 1005 Mount Vernon Ave. Alexandria, VA 22301. The Northern Virginia NARFE chapters will staff a table at the job fair.

Margaret Murphy conducted a drawing for the 50/50 raffle to benefit the Alzheimer's Research Fund. She also conducted a drawing for an Easter Lily plant donated by Ralph Dantine and two prizes from the VFN Conference. The meeting adjourned at 3:12 pm.

SUNSHINE REPORT – HARRIET EPSTEIN

If you know of someone who needs a little sunshine, please contact me at 703-560-4137. We will be passing around a card for you to sign for "someone special" at our May meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT – CHRIS GIESELER

In April 2025, our Chapter received \$261.92 in membership dues collected by NARFE Headquarters. We also received \$26 from the 50/50 drawing for Alzheimer's research, held during the April 15th Chapter meeting. We incurred \$163 in expenses. This amount was a reimbursement to Mark Arpa for (1) the registration fee he paid to attend the Virginia Federation of NARFE (VFN) Annual Meeting and Conference held in Harrisonburg, Virginia, April 6-9, and (2) his meals while at the Conference that were not included in the Conference registration fee.

At the May 13, 2025 Chapter meeting, I plan to submit a corrected claim for reimbursement, to Kathy for approval, for the various expenses I incurred in connection with my attendance at that Conference. If approved, the claim will be paid by Treasurer pro-tem David Graf. The maximum amount for expenses relating to the VFN conference that can be reimbursed is \$1,000, according to the Chapter's approved 2025 Budget. (My claim amount will not get us near the maximum, rest assured.)

Also, on April 2, 2025, I remitted the \$61 in funds collected from the 50/50 drawings at the March and January 2025 Chapter meetings, to Ms. Donna Shackelford, VFN's Alzheimer's Chair.

Other matters--

- Dave has provided me with information to assist in preparing and submitting the Chapter's electronic tax "form," which is due to the IRS by May 15, 2025.
- I plan to discuss with Dave a system for tracking the Chapter's income and expense items, and for ensuring that those items are properly categorized vis-a-vis the Chapter's 2025 budget.
- And, as mentioned at the April Chapter meeting, the Chapter's Bank, Truist, has started sending me the Chapter's monthly bank statements. So, the Chapter will continue to maintain its checking account at that bank. (I previously had presented some options regarding the Chapter's Truist account since the Bank had not yet acted on our request to have the bank statements go to my home address.)

LEGISLATION REPORTS

NATIONAL LEGISLATION REPORT– JIM HATHAWAY

Congressional Legislative Updates Affecting NARFE Members

The three legislative bills which were discussed earlier are as follows. These bills address key aspects of federal personnel policy, compensation, and annuities. They are currently under review and discussion by committee.

- **Saving the Civil Service Act (H.R. 492 - S.134):** Introduced by Representative Connolly and Senator Kaine, this bill seeks to prevent political interference in federal workforce hiring and employment policies.
- **FAIR Act (H.R. 493 - S.126):** Sponsored by Congressman Connolly and Senator Schatz, this legislation proposes a **7.4% pay raise** for federal employees in 2025 to address disparities with private-sector salaries.
- **Equal COLA Act (H.R. 491):** Introduced by Representative Connolly, this bill aims to ensure **equal cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs)** for federal retirees under both FERS and CSRS, eliminating existing disparities.

FY2026 Budget Proposal Discussions

The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Republicans advanced a proposal aimed at cutting federal worker benefits and weakening civil service protections. The measure seeks to reduce federal spending by \$50 billion, primarily by requiring federal employees to contribute more toward retirement while also modifying their annuity calculations to be less generous.

Key provisions include:

- Raising employee contributions to the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) to **4.4%** for those hired before 2014, and an additional **5%** for new hires unless they waive civil service protections.
- Changing FERS annuity calculations from the highest **three** years of salary to the highest **five** years.
- Eliminating the **FERS supplement** for retirees before Social Security eligibility (except for jobs with mandatory retirement).
- Imposing a **\$350 fee** for Merit Systems Protection Board appeals.
- Requiring audits of dependents enrolled in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program.

Committee Chairperson James Comer (R-KY) defended the cuts, citing federal worker benefits as disproportionate to private sector employees. However, Democrats and some Republicans fiercely oppose the provisions, arguing that the changes unfairly reduce earned benefits and weaken job protections. Representative Mike Turner (R-OH) voiced concerns that efforts to retroactively cut pension benefits for existing employees would not pass the full House. He further stated, “Making changes to pensions and retirement benefits in the middle of someone’s employment is wrong. Changing the rules, especially when someone has already been vested in their benefits, is wrong. Employee benefits are not a gift, they are earned. I understand the need for reform, and we can certainly have changes occur for the benefits of new hires, but for current employees, to change the rules for people in the middle of the game is just wrong.”

The Restoring Employment and Hiring Incentives for Removed Employees (REHIRE) Act

This Act is a legislative proposal introduced by Representative Don Beyer (D-VA), with support from several Democratic co-sponsors. This bill is designed to provide hiring preference to federal employees who were involuntarily removed from service between **January 1, 2025, and January 1, 2027**. The provisions in this bill aim to mirror the hiring advantages typically granted to veterans in federal employment. There are several key provisions:

- **Hiring Preference**
Federal employees removed during the specified timeframe would be designated as **preference eligible** when applying for competitive service positions.
- **Exclusions**
The preference would **not** apply to political appointees or individuals removed due to misconduct or poor performance.
- **Companion Legislation**
In conjunction with the REHIRE Act, Representative Beyer also introduced the **Probationary Reduction for Employee Protections (PREP) Act**. The PREP Act aims to standardize probationary periods for federal employees, setting the duration at either one year or one and a half years, depending on the agency.
- **Support and Challenges**
The **REHIRE Act** has received endorsements from public sector unions, including the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), and National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE). Despite union backing, the bill faces significant political challenges, raising uncertainty about its passage. Continued advocacy and legislative negotiations will determine its future prospects.

VIRGINIA STATE LEGISLATION REPORT – CHRIS GIESELER

Budget Bill (HB 1600)

On May 2, 2025, Governor Youngkin signed the Budget Bill (HB 1600). This statute contains provisions, including one that postpones, for one year, the sunset date of the “enhanced” standard deduction amounts from Virginia income taxes. The “enhanced” amounts have been in effect for the past several years and had been set to end (or “sunset”) at the end of tax year 2025. HB 1600’s sunset provision partially addresses one of the legislative priorities of the Virginia Federation of NARFE, by eliminating the sunset date for the enhanced standard deduction, thus avoiding a return to the pre-2019 levels (\$6,000 for joint filers/\$3,000 for single filers) of the deduction amounts, in 2027. In the 2026 Regular Session of

the General Assembly, our legislators will have another opportunity to address the sunset issue. It also RAISES the standard deduction amounts for tax years 2025 and 2026 to \$17,500 for joint filers and \$8,750 for single filers.

In future reports, I plan to explain some of the bills that were passed or vetoed, including the 37 line-item vetoes that the Governor made to HB 1600 on May, notwithstanding that he had also approved the bill.

VFN's State Legislative Priorities for 2026

As to VFN's state legislative priorities for 2026, I have not received word from Deborah Smith, VFN State Legislation Chair, on planned Legislative Team activities to draft a 2026 VFN State Legislative Plan.

November 2025 Local and State Elections

Regarding the upcoming elections, all 7 seats of the Vienna Town Council members, including Mayor Linda Colbert, will be up for election on November 4, 2025 Virginia General Election. There will be no primary for this race. [Our Chapter plans to host a Candidates Forum in September, and we will invite all the candidates.]

By contrast, there will be primaries, presumably statewide, for the Democratic candidates for Lieutenant Governor (6 candidates) and state Attorney General (2 candidates). The Democratic candidate for Governor is Abigail Spanberger, who gave a taped presentation at the April 2025 VFN Annual Meeting & Conference. The Republicans have one candidate for each of the statewide positions. Thus, there is no need to hold a primary for those positions. There has been some controversy surrounding the remaining Republican candidate for Lieutenant Governor, so I will monitor whether any changes happen in that race.

Regarding House of Delegate elections, there will not be primaries in our area to choose candidates for the 2025 General Election. That is because the parties may have already decided on House of Delegates candidates for this year or may have decided to hold local party conventions to choose their candidates. We will find out more about the local races for House of Delegates candidates over the next several weeks.

Early voting for the June 17th Democratic primaries started May 2, 2025. Check the Fairfax County Office of Elections website for further information [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections].

Election of VFN Officers



Candidates for VFN President



Deborah Fisk



Larry McIlwee

Candidates for VFN 1st Vice President



Eddie Eithes



Doris McAdams

SCENES FROM THE 2025 VFN CONFERENCE



Robert Allen, Region X Vice President with Kathy and Chris



Ann Collins (VFN President 2005-2007) with Chris



1st Timers and New Members. Can you spot Chris?



Installation of Officers by NARFE National President Bill Shackelford



Past VFN Presidents with Frances Boatman, current VFN President. Left to right - Bill Shackelford, Kathy Arpa, Dr. Constance Bails, Ann Collins, Frances Boatman, and Luther Santiful



Presentation of Colors – Harrisonburg High School, JROTC Cadets Color Guard



Mark and Kathy and Chris

Mark and Kathy at the Banquet

