

NARFE

FEDERAL BENEFITS EXPERTS

Reaching Out

October 2025

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

Fall greetings and salutations to all! What a glorious time of year. We had great attendance at our first fall meeting for an informative and entertaining history of female spies and soldiers in the Civil War. We also welcomed new members, a long-time absentee member and a guest among our attendees.

Please join us on October 8th, 2025 for a presentation by Charles Sabatino of the Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (VICAP) who will update us on changes to Medicare, including Medicare and hospitals, nursing homes and assisted living facilities. He'll also cover prior authorizations and denials. Since Medicare's Open Enrollment Period begins in October, followed by Blue Cross/Blue Shield's Open Enrollment Period in November, this should be timely information for all of us. BC/BS will present its 2026 FEP program updates to our members in November. Get your questions ready.

Election of chapter officers for 2026 will take place at the October meeting. In addition to nominations received in advance (by October 1 to the chapter secretary), nominations will also be requested from the floor. See the September newsletter for specific information.

Please also note the separate item in this newsletter regarding a proposed change to Article VI of our bylaws as a result of NARFE HQ's decision not to send chapter dues renewal notices to life members after October 1, 2025.

It is a busy time of year, but I encourage you to participate in the Walk to End Alzheimer's on October 11 in Manassas, whether you walk or make a donation to the cause. Please see details elsewhere in this issue.

Legislative Corner

Ed Weiler

Democrats Rally Behind Hardball Strategy to Upcoming Shutdown Fight

OK, I have to come clean. I lifted the above caption from a recent (9/11/25) post on *Government Executive.com*, for the simple reason that, as I write this (9/16/25), I could not come up with a better formula for encapsulating the looming budget fight on Capitol Hill. Until now, the conventional wisdom was that both political parties had learned the hard way that there is little political pay-off to a government shutdown.

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This time around things seem to be different, since the Democrats apparently perceive that a cluster of issues concerning healthcare funding (*e.g.*, expiration of higher subsidy levels under the ACA, cuts to both Medicare and Medicaid enacted under the *One Big beautiful Bill* Act) will play to their favor in the court of public opinion. They might very well be right. Once rolled out and widely utilized, benefits become woven into the economic fabric and difficult, if not impossible, to reel back in. As Senate Minority Leader, Charles Schumer, bluntly stated (as reported by *Governmentexecutive.com*), “The Republicans have to come to meet us in a true bipartisan fashion to satisfy the American people’s needs on health care, or they won’t get our votes.” At this point, a lengthy government shutdown is a definite possibility.

Perhaps in anticipation of an ugly budget fight, House Budget Chair, Jody Arrington (R-TX-19) has reintroduced his *Prevent Government Shutdowns Act (H.R.5130)*, which, among other things, would provide for a continuous 14-day continuing resolution following an appropriations lapse in order to give Congress time to negotiate a budget deal while the Government remains open (*Governmentexecutive.com*, 9/10/25). So far there are no co-sponsors, and no scheduled hearings. Prospects for passage in today’s climate on the Hill? Slim to none.

Social Security’s Office of Legislation & Congressional Affairs (OLCA) Felled by The Administration’s Meat Axe

According to (yet another!) recent story on *Governmentexecutive.com* (9/9/25), OLCA, as part of the Trump Administration’s government downsizing campaign, has been reduced from a staff of approximately 50 to less than 5 persons. As the name implies, the role of this office is to provide technical assistance to Congressional members in drafting legislation and to answer questions from Hill staffers. In addition, this Office has been the go-to place for Social Security-related casework inquiries from Congresspersons. You know this drill. Can’t resolve a problem with Social Security through normal channels? Contact your Congressperson’s caseworker in his/her District Office. And whom do you suppose your caseworker will call? You got it---a staffer at OLCA, at least for the really tough cases.

In an ideal world, all would receive their Social Security benefits in the proper amount and in a timely manner. But given the number of beneficiaries involved, not to mention the complexity of the Program itself, there will always need to be a “complaint department” of last resort. Unfortunately, at least for now, it appears that the Social Security Administration’s capacity in this regard has been severely handicapped.

Reintroduction of Bipartisan Legislation to Protect National Trails Across the U.S.

Happily, not all is doom, gloom, and partisan wrangling on the Hill these days. On September 4th, Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA-8) and Rep. Mike Lawler (R-NY-17) in the House, and Senators Tim Kaine (D-VA) and (retiring) Tom Tillis (R-NC) reintroduced bills in their respective chambers (*H.R. 9159/S.2708*) designed to strengthen our system of National Scenic and Historic Trails. Formally titled as the “Appalachian Trail Centennial Act,” this bill would formalize the relationships of various conservation groups who work with their respective national trail system, thereby giving them national recognition (and presumably enhance their ability to raise funds). The Act would also allow these groups (dubbed, “Designated Operational Partners”) to enter into agreements of up to 20 years with the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service to care for National Scenic and Historic Trails.

Since none of the actions called for in the Act appear to require new Federal funding, its sponsors just might find a way to squeak it through to passage...maybe. The truly interested may find more details on Sen. Kaine's website: <https://www.kane.senate.gov/news>.

Notification of Change to Chapter 7 Bylaws Concerning Life Members

As discussed at the September meeting, as of October 1, 2025, NARFE HQ will no longer send chapter membership dues renewal notices to life members in local chapters. Each chapter must decide whether to charge dues, and, if so, how to handle dues renewal notices and payments to the chapter.

Based upon a current assessment of approximately 8 life members in chapter 7, the Executive Board recommends that we waive the payment of chapter dues for current life members who have already invested significant amounts in NARFE as life members. This change would also apply to future life members and transfer-in life members. Many chapters have already waived dues for life members in recognition of their financial contribution to NARFE.

Accordingly, this will necessitate amending Article VI (Dues) of Chapter 7's current bylaws and require a vote of the membership at our November member meeting. The amended article will be presented at that time and if passed, will be sent to NARFE HQ for approval.

Alzheimer's Report

Nancy Palmerino

We collected \$48 for Alzheimer's research at our September meeting. This brings our total collected to date in 2025 to \$737.60 and within reach of our goal of \$1,500. You can make a donation to Alzheimer's research at any time. Make checks payable to NARFE ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH and note CHAPTER 7 in the memo line to ensure that the chapter gets credit for your donation. You can bring your check to a chapter meeting or mail it to NARFE, Arlington Chapter 7, P.O. Box 100971, Arlington, VA 22210. It's not too early to start thinking about making qualified charitable distributions (QCDs) from your required minimum distribution (RMD) for the year. Thanks for your support. Know that our donations DO make a difference.

Walk to End Alzheimer's – October 11, 2025

The Walk to end Alzheimer's will take place again on October 11 at the Harris Pavilion in Manassas. It is the Tri-Counties Va group. You can donate without attending or attend without walking! Join our Area X VP, Ted Pasek, at the Walk, sign up for the Team "NARFE Area X Va" and Theodore Pasek. Donate for Alzheimer's and support NARFE's contribution. Go to alz.org to get started.

Membership Report

Nancy Palmerino

We wish to welcome our new members Barry DeMaio, Margaret Fibel, Ryan Miller, John and Philomena Rogers and Dave Rostker and extend well wishes to longtime members Sylvia Brady and Patsy Klaus who have moved out of the area. We regret to report the passing of Marvin T. Ely, a NARFE member since 1988. Since last month we have had 6 dropped members, 12 renewals and 1 reinstatement. We have 246 Chapter members and an additional 531 National members in our chapter area for a total of 777 Chapter and National members.

Save the Date:

Open Season Health Fair – Saturday, November 1

The FEHB/PSHB Open Season Health Fair sponsored annually by Congressional District 11 (formerly Gerry Connolly's district) will be held again this year on Saturday, November 1, at the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Pkwy, Fairfax, VA 22035. More details will be provided as the information becomes available.

Chapter 7 Pizza Lunch – Wednesday, November 12

We will be having a free pizza lunch at our November meeting which will feature updates from BC/BS. We will also be collecting non-perishable food items for AFAC. Details on both will be in the November newsletter.

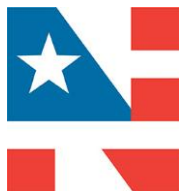
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