



The Shawnee Signal
Chapter 1162 Shawnee Mission Kansas
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

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www.narfe-chapter1162.org

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In Memoriam

Anne M. Yelton

Welcome New Member!

Steve Wurtz

NARFE's Legislative Hotline: (703)-838-7780. Toll free: 1-877-217-8234.

Sunshine Committee: Contact Don Faidley if you know of any members who may be sick.

President's News - Louise Lloyd

As I begin to write this article, the Kansas Federation convention hosted by the Topeka Chapter is now over. Sarah Weissman, the NARFE Director of Grassroots Advocacy was our National guest speaker. Sarah demonstrated how NARFE members can access NARFE's Legislative Action Center via NARFE's website www.narfe.org/legislation. This website provides NARFE members a simple way to "send messages to their members of Congress, learn about legislation of interest to NARFE and review votes taken by their representatives and senators." Members can select "Contact Congress" to send one of NARFE's Action Alert letters, or they can write their own letters." The Legislative section has been updated with the addition of four issues pages "including Federal Employee Pay and Benefits; the FEHBP; the Chained CPI and Postal Reform. Each page includes background on the issue, including impacts it would have on federal community. ***It can be forwarded to others who can add their support.***" I encourage you to make use of the Legislative Action Center to stay informed and connect with Congress.

Sarah Weissman also encouraged NARFE members to like NARFE on Facebook or Twitter so that they can be kept up to date with NARFE postings on these social media. One can connect to these from the NARFE website on the homepage.

Another important topic discussed at the convention was the Strategic Planning process now underway that was highlighted in the April 2015 NARFE Magazine. There is an eleven member committee of NARFE members including one member from each NARFE Region. Strategic Planning is needed to make sure "that NARFE's future operations and organization meet the needs of our constituents". You can access all the information about the Strategic Planning initiative on the NARFE website homepage. I encourage all of you to continually check out what is going on throughout this process as there are some major structural recommendations that will be reviewed and may be proposed. The Committee wants to define a future NARFE that is attractive to potential members while continuing to meet the needs of current members. All NARFE members can provide comments/input through a special e-mail address: stratplan@narfe.org, so please feel free to submit comments.

Finally, I encourage all members to attend our May 26th meeting to hear Elaine Giessel from the KC Sierra Club who will focus on water rights. Her presentation should cover some aspects of current regulations but also issues and challenges for water planning management in Kansas. Kansas has a dedicated State Water Plan Fund used to implement the State's Water Plan. There have been rescissions in funding the past few years as the state has dealt with serious continuing budget challenges..

Legislative News - Louis Bornman 1st Vice President and Legislative Chair

April 26th-28th, Elizabeth and I attended the NARFE Kansas Federation Convention in Topeka at the downtown Ramada Inn. It was a very interesting convention and it started with a presentation by me on NARFE Legislative Advocacy and a presentation by Tom Huntzinger of Lawrence, our Kansas Federation PAC Coordinator, on NARFE PAC. Sarah Weissmann from NARFE Headquarters was our national officer guest speaker and gave a great presentation also on legislative advocacy and reported on the issues raised in the House and Senate budget plans. This past week the House and Senate worked out a joint compromise budget plan that eliminated the specific cuts that I reported in the last newsletter but still included a \$194 Billion reduction for federal workers and retirees over the next 10 years but did not give specific guidance on how that was to be achieved. Please remember to contact our Congressman and Senators to let them know that these cuts are unacceptable. Watch for notifications from national Headquarters on the specific bills that will include these cuts. And above all remember, our Congressman and Senators consider silence as acceptance and consent. That means that if you do not contact them and tell them that the proposed legislation is bad and will hurt you, they will see that as your agreement with their legislation and they will vote for it and make cuts to your retirement and/or federal employee healthcare benefits that may be included in that legislation. At least if you contact them there is a chance they will not vote to cut your benefits.

I also want to encourage you to donate to NARFE-PAC. Our Political Action Committee is a vital part of our legislative advocacy program. Unfortunately ever since 1994, when Newt Gingrich was Speaker of the House and told Congressmen that if someone did not contribute to their election campaign they did not have to engage with them, being able to engage with members of Congress and the Senate has become "pay to play." Our NARFE-PAC contributions allow our legislative department to gain access to the major party committees of the House and Senate and to many of the key committee members who have direct influence over the funding bills that cover our active employee and retiree pay and benefits. Having this access is key to being able to influence the legislation these committees pass. If everyone in NARFE gave just \$10 to PAC we could have almost \$2.4 Million to support our legislative efforts.

Future Meeting Dates/Activities:

May 26th – 1:30 p.m. Business Meeting Overland Park Lutheran Church, 79th and Lowell. Program: Elaine Giessel, Chair of the Kanza Group of the KC Sierra Club regarding Water rights/issues.

June 23rd – 1:00 p.m. Business Meeting/Potluck luncheon, Overland Park Lutheran Church, 79th and Lowell.

Program: Presenter from Honor Flight Network of Kansas City

July – No Chapter meeting

August- No Chapter meeting

August 24th-26th – NARFE Region V College of NARFE Knowledge (CONK), South Sioux City, Nebraska

Alzheimer's News – Judy Lukas Arnold, Alzheimer's Chairperson

Attending the State Federation meeting for my third consecutive year was exhilarating, as usual. Louise, Louis, Elizabeth, and others can fill you in on extremely important matters that face us all. However, I wish to discuss the impact of Alzheimer's and the significance of this particular work.

When all of the local chairpersons, including our new State Chair, Joann Miller, met in Topeka, I do not think there was an unraised hand when asked "Who has had someone in their lives affected by Alzheimer's?" Joanne's stepfather early this year was diagnosed. So, this is what drives all of us – the direct failings and witnessed losses of parents, relatives, friends, strangers, & even selves.

"What to do?" we may ask ourselves. We can do as we did in Topeka and gather together in camaraderie and spirit by raising funds to help in research to eliminate Alzheimer's and other dementias. We raised almost \$6,000 in Kansas through our Live and Silent Auctions. Locally, thanks to Elizabeth & Louis Bornman, Don Faidley, Sheryl Gulley, Louise Lloyd, Frank McGough & Judy Arnold, who donated items, which accounted for at least 6% of the total brought in.

But another thing we can do is to send straight donations. I was reminded at the conference that most of you reading this do not attend chapter meetings. Certainly, that is your prerogative, but that does not diminish an accountability for community service. If you would like to show that you care, send donations to: NARFE-Alzheimer's Research, c/o Judy Arnold, 11605 West 60th Place, Shawnee, KS, 66203. You may also send Best Choice labels/bar codes there.

Contact Information:
Senator Jerry Moran – jerry_moran@moran.senate.gov; Olathe, KS office telephone 913-393-0711. D.C. Office: 202-224-6521. *Signup for newsletter:* www.moran.senate.gov
Senator Pat Roberts – pat_roberts@roberts.senate.gov; Overland Park Office: 913-451-9343. D.C. Office: 202-224-4774. *Signup for newsletter:* www.roberts.senate.gov
Congressman Kevin Yoder – Overland Park, KS telephone: 913-621-0832, Washington D.C. telephone: 202-225-2865. *Signup for newsletter:* www.yoder.house.gov

Service Officer – Elizabeth Bornman

Earlier this month, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) released a recorded webcast that provides updates and answers on the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP), the Federal Flexible Spending Account Program (FSAFEDS), the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program and the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program. Topics covered in the video include:

- FEHB Self Plus One enrollment type
- FEHB Family Member Audit
- Changes to FSAFEDS
- FEGLI and FLTCIP
- FEDVIP certification for dependents who are incapable of self-support
- Program Policies/regulations
- Elimination of the Annual Guide to Federal Benefits

The video also includes information on an OPM initiative to encourage people to enroll in Medicare. The presenters are employees of OPM's Federal Employee Insurance Operations and Planning and Policy Analysis.

Remember to keep your family members up to date with your changes and where to find those important documents needed to obtain their benefits after your death. Don't forget those necessary passwords to your on line accounts to include the OPM website.

NARFE-PAC, Edward Acosta, Chairperson

To protect your earned pay and benefits, please consider contributing to NARFE-PAC to enable NARFE to get greater access to Congressional members and key committees. Checks made out to NARFE-PAC can be mailed to me at 14311 W. 116th Terrace, Apt. 2008, Olathe, KS 66062.

OPM Retirement Information: Remarriage, divorce, death or spouse, change of address or financial institution or amount of insurance under FEGLI, **1-888-767-6738**

A reminder that retirees can sign up for the Dues Withholding option to obtain a 15% discount (\$6) on your annual NARFE dues. Dues withholding applications are included in each monthly NARFE magazine, and applications are also on the NARFE website at www.narfe.org.

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