



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

James F. St John
Gertrude Wells

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.

Alzheimer's News : We are still in need of a Chapter Alzheimer's Chairperson. If interested, please contact Chapter President, Louise Lloyd.

President's News - Louise Lloyd

I was fortunate to attend the annual Kansas Federation Convention held in Salina along with six other active chapter members. On Sunday afternoon, members were able to participate in the Legislative forum afternoon as well as several training sessions and committee meetings. With the help of technology, Sarah Weissman, from NARFE's Legislative Dept. made a presentation Monday morning. NARFE's Legislative team is ranked in the top ten on Capitol Hill. With the FY 2017 budget process NARFE is still playing a defensive role, and Sarah explained it is difficult to know what to expect especially as we get closer to October 1st. Aside from budget issues some priorities for NARFE include WEP reform. The proposed legislation is deficit neutral. NARFE members are encouraged to visit NARFE's Legislative Action Center to support the HR 711 bill. Another priority is Postal reform as up to 30% of NARFE members are postal employees or retirees. Some of the issues are cross cutting and could affect all of us. The real concern is that Congress might try something on postal employees, and then expand the concept to all federal employees for example. Overall Sarah emphasized that when issues or bills come up that could potentially affect NARFE members that grassroots strength is critical, and legislators want to hear from constituents. Sarah also noted that a single thoughtful letter really does have greater impact than 100 form letters. But if personalized letter is not possible, NARFE makes it very simple to contact your congressional delegation thru our Legislative action center and emails that are sent to members making it so simple to contact Congress. I just can't emphasize enough, if you haven't shared your email address with NARFE HQ, you are missing out on one of the simplest and effective ways to stay informed and also be ready to react to Congress. One thing that is vitally important overall for all of us to remember that as far as congressional delegation goes, "Silence is Acceptance".

Carol Ek, NARFE Region V President, and Kansas NARFE member also made a presentation at the convention. Carol talked about some of the important proposed resolutions that will be voted at the National Convention in late August. Most result from the work undertaken by the Strategic Planning Team. If you haven't accessed, the Strategic Plan document on the NARFE website, I encourage you to do so. Some of the proposals drastically affect the way NARFE would be structured. At the next two chapter meetings, we will be discussing some of the proposals to provide input to our chapter's National Convention delegates.

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

Elizabeth and I attended the Kansas State NARFE Federation convention on 24-26 April in Salina, at the Ambassador Hotel and Conference Center. We had a total of 118 people in attendance this year. It seems like our attendance gets a little smaller every year. That was very evident to me when I read the list of members who passed this past year from our chapter during the memorial service. Our chapter had 28 members who passed this last year since the last convention. The main thing I want to report on was our efforts in NARFE-PAC. NARFE -PAC is our separately funded political action committee that gains us access to legislators on both sides of the aisle to talk with them about legislative actions that affect both active and retired federal employees. NOTE: we DO NOT make contributions to presidential campaigns! During the 2015-2016 election cycle the national NARFE-PAC goal is to raise \$1 million and based upon the latest report we are well on our way. Region V is 5th nationally with \$92,231.83 and KS is 3rd in our region with \$17,629.00 as of the end of March. At the Convention we raised another \$2200.00. We also had 13 sustainers (those who sign up to make continuing contributions of \$10 per month on their credit card for an election cycle (2 years)). During the convention we signed up 6 more sustainers. Tom Huntzinger, our federation NARFE-PAC Coordinator reported on how our funds have been used. A detailed report of contributions and disbursements is available on the NARFE national website under NARFE-PAC. Call me if you have any questions.

Federal Public Safety Employees Can Make Penalty-Free TSP Withdrawals Starting at Age 50: The Defending Public Safety Employees Retirement Act of 2015 amended the Internal Revenue Code to allow specified federal law enforcement officers, customs and border protection officers, federal firefighters and air traffic controllers who separate from service during or after the year they become age 50 to make withdrawals from the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) without incurring a 10 percent early withdrawal penalty. Under the prior law in effect through Dec. 31, 2015, public safety officials only included state or local public safety employees. Federal public safety employees who retired before age 55 could receive their CSRS annuities or FERS annuities with no early withdrawal penalty. This is because the CSRS annuity and the FERS annuity are federal government-sponsored defined benefit plans. *The new law extends the availability of the age 50 exception to include distributions from governmental defined contributed plans, such as the TSP. Previously these individuals had to wait until age 59.5 in order make penalty-free TSP withdrawals. The new law changes that.*

Only TSP distributions taken after Dec. 31, 2015 will qualify for the new expanded age 50 exception provision. Also, separation from federal service must occur in the year a federal public safety official becomes 50 or older. If a public safety official retires in the year before he or she becomes age 50, then the exception does not apply. (Information from May 3, 2016 article in "My Federal Retirement" by Edward Zurndorfer, Certified Financial Planner and instructor at federal employee retirement seminars.)

Future Meeting Dates/Activities:

May 24th – 1:30 p.m. Business Meeting, Overland Park Lutheran Church, 79th and Lowell. Program: Presentation by Kansas/Missouri Cremation Society

June 28th – Potluck luncheon/Business Meeting, 1 p.m. Overland Park Lutheran Church.

Service Officer – Elizabeth Bornman

The 62nd State Federation Convention went well. However attendance was down. Next year the Convention will be in Hutchison, KS hosted by the federation Executive Board. The 50/50 drawing raised 700 dollars. The winner was from Chapter 2, Topeka. The proposed bylaw amendment changed the area Vice Presidents term of office to two years instead of one year and passed effective this year. Louis Bornman was re-elected as Area I Vice President which represents the Shawnee Mission Chapter. The live and silent auctions for Alzheimer went well, exceeding the amount raised in 2015. Awards were presented to the chapters in Kansas who met the \$5.50 or above based on the number of individuals in the chapter. 20 awards were given out. Our chapter didn't meet the Kansas goal. Our federation is number 2 in region V and 4th in the Nation. \$11.7 M contributed by NARFE since FEB 2016. Next year's goal will be \$6.00 per person average.

PAC needs our support this year. Consider giving to get the right individuals in office to protect our benefits. The current work force needs our support too. We don't know how much longer they can keep taking hits in their future benefits. Look for another increase next year in Medicare Premiums for those who are not FERS retirees. The current budget based on the federal retiree paying more for their health insurance and less by the federal government. The budget also has eliminated the FERS Annuity Supplement entirely, to include encouraging the total elimination of the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) and decreasing the rate of return of the Thrift Savings Plan's Government Securities Fund "G". The worst is for the current workforce to contribute 6 percent and not get anything more in return with the increase. Things are not looking good unless we can change the current House and Senate members.

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

Retirees can sign up for the Dues Withholding option and receive a 15% discount (\$6) on your annual NARFE dues. Forms are included in each monthly NARFE magazine and applications are also on the NARFE website at www.narfe.org.

Reminder: Don't forget to bring your egg cartons & plastic grocery bags to meetings for donation to the Community Service Center of Shawnee, Inc.

NARFE-PAC, Edward Acosta, Chairperson

One of the biggest threats to the federal community is privatization—the contracting of jobs done by the federal sector to the private arena. There has been Congressional planning for the Federal Aviation Administration and, lately, the Department of Veterans Affairs which are touted as money-saving endeavors. However, there are four concerns to be considered in making the case against the whole idea of privatization. What is most concerning about this cost-cutting idea is that it is the center of “small government” discussions—Postal Service and Civil Service reforms, FERS pension changes, etc.

The first argument against privatization is a lack of transparency—corporations do not have to be accountable for the money they spend or the actions they take; second is efficiency of their performance within the fiscal limits they are given; third is expertise—the quality of what they do; the fourth factor is identification with their mission and the people they serve—how they define their efforts and see the people they are tasked with serving.

The idea of privatization will underscore the need to develop and maintain allies to make the argument for the federal sector. This is the primary reason for the existence of NARFE-PAC or the Committee tasked with representing the federal sector with national legislators. If you want to make a contribution to NARFE-PAC you may either use the form in the NARFE magazine or mail a check to E Acosta, 14311 West 116 Terr, Apt 2008, Olathe, KS 66062. Better yet, consider becoming a NARFE sustainer which enables you to donate at least \$10 monthly which is charged to your credit card which gives you a special lapel pin and NARFE duffel bag.

One of the NARFE-PAC fund-raising techniques used by the local chapter is a 50/50 drawing by which the winner splits the total fund. The winner last month was Bruce Smith who won \$11.50, but donated his winnings back to our chapter for donation to NARFE-PAC.

Upcoming NARFE Federal Benefits Institute Webinars – Information www.narfe.org.

May 26th – Exploring TSP Withdrawal Options (includes 1 hr Q & A session after)

June 30th – 5 year Countdown to Retirement

September 15th – Post Retirement

Webinars are free to NARFE members. Individuals who are not NARFE members can access for \$39.95 registration fee and they will be given NARFE membership. This is an excellent way to interest other eligible federal employees/annuitants in NARFE as it demonstrates an outstanding benefit that NARFE offers to its members.

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Your May Shawnee Signal



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