

NARFE Chapter 1192
June 1, 2022, Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER President Pat Turner called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m., Red Lion Hotel, Kennewick. She welcomed 21 chapter members and 4 guests – Susan Inlow-Romine and Lynda Meyers, the program speakers; Dot Stewart, wife of member Bob Stewart; and, Beki Van Buren, wife of member J Van Buren.

Pat welcomed everyone, reminded everyone to silence electronic devices and then asked those who could to stand for a moment of silence for:

- The entire Uvalde, Texas, community, that they may find needed comfort and support;
- Continued thoughts for Ukraine, its people, and all who are trying to assist them.
- Our active-duty military, our military retirees, and all military families, that they may know their service is appreciated.

Pat then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Introductions – Pat recognized:

- Master Gardeners Susan Inlow-Romine and Lynda Meyers, today's program speakers who Mary would introduce later in the meeting. Pat added that this would be a great program today and that she can't say enough good things about the Master Gardeners based on her experience and the programs they have for the community.
- New member Judy West who joined NARFE/the chapter at the recent Veterans' Service Fair. Pat said she recognized Judy from her days at KONA radio.
- Pat also welcomed guests Dot Stewart and Beki Van Buren.

CHAPTER/FEDERATION/DISTRICT OFFICER AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

President *Pat Turner.*

- General comments and updates:
 - Pat announced that several board members could not attend today's meeting – Nancy Crosby, Ellen LeVee, Faye Vlieger and Darleen Wall. Other board members would provide reports for them.
 - She reminded members this would be the last chapter meeting until September.
 - And, for VP Nancy, Pat added that she wanted to give a special thank you to the Red Lion staff for the great service and food at our luncheons.
- Pat announced 2 NARFE leadership changes:
 - Barb Sido, NARFE executive director for 5 years, left NARFE May 15 "to pursue other opportunities" per a short announcement from NARFE President Ken Thomas.
 - Johann De Castro, NARFE staff vice president of finance and administration, was selected "to fill the interim position of NARFE's acting executive director."
- Pat reported that she and Johanna Caylor attended the funeral services for long-time NARFE and chapter member Sig Preston, and her son, Mark. She said, "It was elegant, first class." Later in the meeting, Johanna said she handed out about 100 red poppies at the funeral [the official flower of the VFW and typically handed out prior to Memorial Day].
- Finally, Pat provide a couple of summer reminders for members – check both the chapter, www.narfe1192.org, website, which Larry Williams, chapter webmaster keeps up to date, and the WSF website, www.narfewa.org. Both have much good information.

Vice President *Nancy Crosby.* Pat provided Nancy's thank you to the Red Lion staff, above.

Treasurer's Report *Liz Bowers.*

- Liz provided a handout on each table summarizing the chapter's 2022 budget, to date. The summary reflected a combined checking and savings accounts balance of \$16,936.05. Members with questions can contact Liz.

- **Monies collected at the June meeting** Lunch, \$380; Alzheimer's Research Fund, \$30; NARFE-PAC, \$6; 50/50, \$20 collected/\$10 (donated to the Alzheimer's Research Fund); general donations, \$0; other income, \$0.

Secretary *Mary Binder.*

- **Sunshine Coordinator report for Faye Vlieger.** Faye recently sent cards to:
 - Members Hazel and Burr Elliott on the loss of Burr's brother.
 - Member Cora Baldwin on the passing of her sister, member Sigrid Preston, and to Linnea Preston, on the passing of her mother, Sigrid. To note, just a few days before Sig's passing, her son Mark passed away.
 - Members Nancy Crosby and Liz Bowers who both had surgery recently.
 - Member Betty Robertson whose daughter, Sandra Schoenrock, is seriously ill. Card also sent to Sandra.
- **Caller Coordinator report for Darleen Wall.** Mary reminded members that Darleen and her husband now live in Arizona but Darleen continues to be a chapter member and the chapter's caller coordinator. She said Darleen always wants to thank the callers for all they do before each meeting to contact local chapter members who have asked to be called. Mary added that she believes the Tri-Cities chapter is the only one in the NARFE Washington State Federation (WSF) that uses such a system, and that it helps to keep in touch with members and let them know about meetings and other NARFE-related items.
- **Service Officer report for Ellen LeVee.** Mary shared the following information for Ellen:
 - TSP upgrades, including new features such as a mobile app, are scheduled to be completed the first week of June.
 - New OPM login changes were scheduled to be implemented May 28. The goal is to make accounts/information more secure. Separate email addresses will be required for separate accounts, e.g., husbands/wives who share an email address and who both have OPM accounts will now need separate email addresses.
 - Upcoming and archived NARFE webinars:
 - June 8, Understanding FERS Deferred/Postponed Retirement, 2 PM, ET.
 - July 7, Understanding Military and Civilian Federal Service Credit, 2 PM, ET.
 - For archived webinars, there is now a description/summary included vs. just a title. Also, all past webinars are no longer archived. Currently, the archived webinars go back to January 2019, so for about 3 years.
 - FEDHub, NARFE's "online community" for active and retired federal employees to connect and share information continues to grow. A mobile app is now available for those with smartphones. Our NARFE federation is now on FEDHub. NARFE provides regular updates on FEDHub, for example, in the June/July *NARFE Magazine*, page 6.

Newsletter/Public Relations Coordinator *Mary Binder.*

- July/August chapter newsletter articles are due to Mary by Friday, June 10. Publication is targeted for early July.
- A reminder – the current *NARFE Magazine* is a combined June/July issue. The next monthly issue will be for August.
- The chapter had a table at the May 21, Veterans' Service Fair, Three Rivers Convention Center. It was hosted by Congressman Dan Newhouse. Mary thanked Johanna Caylor, Faye Vlieger and John Wetterling for their help staffing the table and talking with attendees. Besides a brief opportunity to talk with Congressman Newhouse, Mary said there were good conversations with many attendees; that Judy West from the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve joined NARFE and the chapter, as noted above; and that there were opportunities to interact with other "vendors" letting them know about NARFE and as possible future chapter meeting programs.

- Washington State Rural Letter Carriers Association’s annual convention, May 22-24, Red Lion Hotel Kennewick Columbia Center. Mary said the chapter had a NARFE table inside the meeting room and staffed it for the entire convention. She also had an opportunity to address attendees about NARFE. She said she found the updated NARFE Elevator Speech helpful in the presentation. Further, to give a “little hook” to the presentation, she told those at the convention that she wanted them to remember “3Ps and a B” regarding NARFE – Preserving, Protecting Pay and Benefits. Further, in a brief thank you to members at the end of the convention for allowing NARFE to be present, she again emphasized the “3Ps and a B.” Three attendees joined and several expressed interest. NARFE has been invited to attend this association’s 2023 convention in Silverdale. Mary said she has let her counterpart in the Bremerton chapter know about next year’s convention.
- Tri-City Regional Chamber of Commerce annual meeting and awards ceremony, May 25, Three Rivers Convention Center. Mary and Pat attended and had several good conversations with other attendees. They also got 2 possibilities for future chapter programs. The June, July and August meetings/programs had not yet been announced.
- Mary provided a copy of the NARFE Elevator Speech at each attendee’s place. She again said that she found this to be a succinct and well-written document. She gave members a “homework assignment” for the summer – periodically review the document, become familiar and comfortable with the key points and find examples in their own experiences they could share regarding how NARFE has helped them. She added that even though the chapter would not be meeting during the summer, the board would still be working for the chapter and its members. She challenged attendees to also “work a little” during the summer by becoming familiar and comfortable with the Elevator Speech.

WSF VP/DVP I/Editor, The Federation Reporter, *Mary Binder*;
Alzheimer’s Coordinator Lorie Bennett.

- VP Mary:
 - John Wells, District II VP, recently passed away. Mary shared that to be closer to family, John moved to Washington State a few years ago from Tennessee where he had been very active in NARFE, including serving as Tennessee Federation president. He immediately became active in the Washington State Federation until his health declined. He recently moved to Oregon to be closer to a daughter. Currently both WSF President Steve Roy and DVP III Bea Bull are trying to cover District II as no one has volunteered to serve as the DVP.
 - Reminded members about the NARFE national conference, **FEDcon22**, August 21-23, Westin Kierland, Scottsdale, Arizona.
 - Early registration ended May 13 and the price has gone from \$190 to \$215.
 - “Scholarships” for members who attend are available from the federation – the \$190 early registration fee (those registering after early registration closed will have to pay the difference), and up to \$750 for other expenses. To be reimbursed, members attending must submit the required reimbursement paperwork, including receipts.
 - In addition to the WSF scholarship, the Chapter 1192 board approved a \$250 scholarship for Chapter 1192 members who attend and submit the required paperwork. Currently, 7 chapter members are registered to attend, which represents almost half of the federation’s registered attendees. Mary emphasized this reflects very positively on the chapter!
 - Reminder! The WSF virtual conference will be during the week starting October 9, most likely on October 10-14. Mary shared that the conference committee is still working on the agenda. Sessions would not be all day but on parts of different days.

- The next WSF virtual board meeting is Tuesday, July 12, 10 a.m. All chapter and national-only members are welcome to attend. Details are on the WSF website, www.narfewa.org.
- DVP I Mary
 - Christy Price, president, Columbia Basin/Ephrata Chapter 0856, has arranged for a special chapter meeting, June 2, to discuss and vote on whether to keep the chapter open or to close it. The chapter stopped meeting during the COVID lockdown and has not met since. Christy can no longer lead the chapter; the treasurer/only other officer, Joan Jensen, is now living in East Wenatchee; and, no other chapter members have stepped forward to lead.
 - Regarding the other District I chapters, Mary reported:
 - Yakima Chapter 238 has not resumed meeting since the COVID lockdown.
 - Wenatchee Chapter 239 has only had 2 meetings since the COVID lockdown and the chapter's board will be meeting soon to discuss the chapter's future.
 - Colville Valley Chapter 1247 is meeting but only has between 4 and 6 members who attend.
 - So, Spokane Chapter 32 and Tri-Cities Chapter 1192 are currently the only 2 district chapter that are really active.
- Editor Mary, *The Federation Reporter*. No report.
- Alzheimer's Coordinator Lorie. Lorie provided a brief report on a letter from Congressman Dan Newhouse on Alzheimer's research and its importance; and, there were a lot of other activities involving Alzheimer's and research ongoing, including a forum in Washington, D.C.

Legislative Coordinator *Mary Binder*.

- Federal:
 - The Senate introduced the Equal COLA Act, S.4221, May 16. The House companion bill is H.R. 304. NARFE President Ken Thomas issued a statement urging lawmakers to pass the legislation, which would "result in more equitable COLA calculations for FERS retirees."
 - NARFE is accepting proposals now through July 15 for the 118th Congress, 2023-2024. Proposals will "help craft the Association's advocacy during the 118th Congress." Ideas are welcome. Mary explained the basic process for establishing NARFE's advocacy focus for each Congress. Members who want more information and/or details can contact her.
- State: No update.

NARFE-PAC Coordinator *John Wetterling*. John recapped NARFE's current fundraising goals and said NARFE still has a long way to go to reach them. He had a sign at the meeting PAC table with the goals. He encouraged members to donate and to consider becoming a NARFE-PAC sustainer, which helps the NARFE Advocacy Department in budgeting for NARFE-PAC.

Alzheimer's Coordinator *Larry Williams*. Larry reported on 3 events:

- The 2022 local Walk to End Alzheimer's, Kennewick, is Sunday, October 9. Larry has registered a Chapter 1192 team again this year. Members can donate to the team and not walk, but those who donate and walk receive a T-shirt. How-to-register information is in the chapter newsletter. New this year – the chapter will have a table at the Walk. Larry said that Mary Binder recently learned that the Alzheimer's Association encourages local Walk coordinators to allow NARFE to have tables at the Walks "because of NARFE's extraordinary efforts" over many years to support Alzheimer's research. Larry said he will be asking for volunteers to staff the table.
- Larry also reported that Mary has been able to arrange for an educational Alzheimer's presentation at the October chapter meeting – The Ten Warning Signs of Alzheimer's. This

is a timely presentation as it will be prior to the annual local Walk to End Alzheimer's and the chapter's annual "white elephant" fundraiser at the November chapter meeting.

- Regarding the November meeting, Larry reminded members to be thinking about items they may want to bring for the auction fundraiser!

Webmaster *Larry Williams*. Larry reported that he and Randy Grekowicz, who has volunteered to be his backup, were planning to meet after the meeting to discuss further training for Randy.

Membership Coordinator *Johanna Caylor*. Johanna provided a short membership update. New member Judy West had a question about dues withholding. She will work with Johanna. Johanna encouraged members who have membership questions/issues to contact her.

Old Business No old business.

New Business No new business.

Announcements Pat announced that she met Governor's Inslee's executive assistant this morning and found her friendly and personable.

Open Discussion No open discussion.

Free Lunch Drawing Bob Stewart.

50/50 Drawing Dot Stewart, \$10, donated to the Alzheimer's Research Fund.

June Birthdays John Wetterling, Layna Kinsman

July Birthdays Lorie Bennett

August Birthdays Hazel Elliott; Nancy Crosby

June Anniversaries John and Claudia Wetterling; Nancy Glaesmann and Chuck Clayton; Bob and Dot Stewart

July Anniversaries Norma VanPatten and her husband

August Anniversaries No one at the meeting.

Next Chapter Virtual Board Meeting Monday, August 1, 10:00 a.m.

- Non-board members, contact Nancy Crosby to attend; she will then send the Zoom link.
- All chapter members are welcome.

Next Chapter Meeting Wednesday, September 7, Red Lion Hotel, Kennewick. Doors open at 11:30 a.m. for social time; meeting/program begin at noon. If the meeting is changed to virtual:

- Meeting changes are announced in emails, posted on the chapter website, or provided by the callers for local members who are on the meeting call list. Members with email addresses listed with the chapter will be notified a week in advance.
- For those new to virtual meetings, contact Nancy for assistance and/or questions.

September Chapter Meeting Program Erin Lee, director, Ready! For Kindergarten, The Children's Reading Foundation of the Mid-Columbia, is scheduled to provide a presentation on the foundation, including volunteer needs and opportunities. **[Change: The presentation will be by Leanne Purcell, executive director, The Children's Reading Foundation of the Mid-Columbia. She will provide an overview of the foundation, including its "Team Read" program.] (POC: Mary Binder)**

Closing Remarks *President Pat*. Pat:

- Reminded members how important it is to contact our legislators, especially about legislation important to NARFE and the entire federal community.
- Wished a Happy Father's Day to all dads, including those no longer with us.
- Wished everyone a safe and enjoyable summer.
- And finally, Pat said above all else, family is first.

MEETING PROGRAM Mary shared that while looking for some other information, she came across chapter minutes from the April 4, 2007 meeting at which there was a presentation by Master Gardener Ron Kathren. To the best of her knowledge, that was the last Master Gardener presentation. Mary then introduced Master Gardeners Susan Inlow-Romine and Lynda Meyers from the Master Gardener Program, Washington State University Benton County Extension.

Susan has been a Master Gardener since 2016; Lynda, for about 20 years. Susan is originally from Southern California. She spent 35 years in banking with Wells Fargo, including a relocation to Beaverton Oregon in 1995. She subsequently relocated to the Tri-Cities with her husband. Lynda was born and raised in Pasco and had a 30-year career at Columbia Basin College.

Susan provided an overview of the program, including that it started in Washington State in 1973 as a Washington State University (WSU) extension program in King and Pierce counties. The program is now in all 50 states and has expanded worldwide with more than 85,000 locations. Locally, the Master Gardeners serve as a WSU resource and for the community. The program is funded primarily through donations and its annual plant sales.

Susan had a tri-fold brochure for meeting attendees and highlighted several programs listed in the brochure, e.g., the food gardening programs; the demonstration garden in Kennewick; the garden education series Saturday class; and, becoming a volunteer.

Looking ahead, a “junior” Master Gardener program is under development and will be going into schools. Susan also encouraged members to go to the demonstration garden, which is next to the Mid-Columbia Library at 1620 S. Union Street, Kennewick. It contains one of only two test rose gardens in the state, and includes a bird and butterfly garden. **(POC: Mary Binder)**

MEETING ADJOURNED 1:40 p.m.

Prepared by:
Mary Alice Binder,
Secretary