

NARFE Chapter 1192
March 2, 2016 Chapter Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER President Lorie Bennett called the meeting to order at noon, Red Lion Hotel, Kennewick, Wash. She reminded members to turn off/silence their mobile devices. She welcomed 29 members and 1 guest – today’s program speaker, Dr. Janelle Downs. Lorie also welcomed 2 members attending their first meeting – Yvonne Sherman and Terese Pratt. Member Ben Brown also was at the meeting for the first time in quite a while. Lorie introduced the board, led the Pledge of Allegiance and called for a moment of silence for those who have passed away.

BOARD/CHAPTER MINUTES/TREASURER REPORTS/PROGRAM SIGN-UP SHEETS, ETC.

Note: chapter minutes and treasurer reports are on the chapter’s website; copies are also at meetings. Event sign-up sheets, the latest chapter newsletter, and miscellaneous handouts and NARFE forms/publications are also at meetings.

OFFICER/DISTRICT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

President/Service Officer/Special Programs *Lorie Bennett.*

- The chapter is 45 years old! The first meeting was March 3, 1971. Member Pat Turner was at that meeting and is still a chapter member and now the chapter’s 1st vice president. For dessert today – a special “birthday” cake. Copies of minutes from the first meeting were provided.
- Chapter Annual Food Drive – Lorie thanked members for their food and or cash donations. Member Yvonne Sherman will take the donations to the Tri-Cities Food Bank. **[Note: \$90 in donations collected and 102 pounds of food.]**
- March is NARFE-PAC Month! Steve Howes, the chapter’s NARFE-PAC chairman, will talk more about this in his report.
- 34th NARFE National Convention – information is on the NARFE website and in the monthly *narfe* magazine.
 - Convention dates are August 28 – September 1, Grand Sierra Hotel, Reno.
 - Registration opened March 1. Forms are on the NARFE website.
 - Committee assignments – deadline to submit an application is March 4. Forms are on the NARFE website; Nancy Crosby also had some at the meeting.
 - Scholarships – the WSFC is offering a \$100 “scholarship” to members attending the convention to help offset costs.
 - More information is in the February and March *narfe* magazines.
- NARFE website – Lorie asked members to keep checking the NARFE website for everything from calls to action and letters to submit to our elected officials to updates on current events, and many other things.
- Dust Devils game, June 18 – a group activity for chapter members. Cost is \$8/per ticket; \$9/for handicap seating. Lorie has a signup sheet. More details to follow at future meetings.
- Reminder: Check the back table for chapter and board meeting minutes, treasurer’s report, handouts, signup sheets, and other materials.

1st Vice President *Pat Turner.* No report.

2nd Vice President/Webmaster *Larry Williams.* No report.

Secretary/Sunshine/Newsletter/PR *Mary Binder.*

- The March/April chapter newsletter was finalized, mailed, sent electronically and posted on the chapter website. Members indicated they had received their copies.
- Final reminder! Photo submissions for the annual NARFE calendar contest are due by March 15. Copies of the submission instructions were on the back table.
- Applications are being accepted for the 2016 NARFE Scholarship Program. The program is open to graduating high school seniors planning to attend college and who are related to NARFE members, e.g., children, step-children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, step-grandchildren, etc. Information, including the application, is in the February *narfe* magazine, pages 44 and 47. Copies of the application were also on the back table.
- Senior Life Show is June 9, Three Rivers Convention Center.

- Blank cards and pens were on each table for those wanting to submit ideas/suggestions for future meeting programs. Ideas and suggestions welcome! Mary said good programs help contribute to good meeting attendance.
- Sunshine – for Mary, Lorie announced that member Ruby Ulseth’s husband, Jim, passed away recently as did Sig Preston’s special friend, John.

Treasurer’s Report *Nancy Crosby.*

- Nancy said she amended the January report as she omitted the budgeted amount for the newsletters in the obligated funds.
- Balance on hand as of January 31, \$10,343.13. February receipts were \$1,080.35 and disbursements, \$600.64, leaving a balance of \$10,822.84. Projected obligations are \$3,028.00, leaving an unobligated balance of \$7,794.84.
- Nancy will be filing the required Form 990N, which is required for the chapter to maintain its non-profit, 501(c)(5), status.
- **Monies collected at the March meeting** Luncheon, \$390 (26 paid; 3 comp’d); Alzheimer’s Research Fund, \$45; NARFE-PAC, \$140; Newsletter, \$13; 50/50 Raffle, \$38/\$19 awarded (donated to Alzheimer’s Research Fund).

District V Vice President *Nancy Crosby.*

- Nancy updated members on the 2016 WSFC Convention, May 15-17, Three Rivers Convention Center, Kennewick.
 - Forms – are on the WSFC website. The chapter’s website also has a link to the forms.
 - Volunteers – Nancy thanked those who volunteered at the February meeting. She still needs more, and will ask people if she does not get members to just volunteer.
 - Booster List – Johanna was circulating the form. For WSFC conventions, members are asked to donate \$1 and become a “booster.” The contributions help offset convention costs. Chapters and their “boosters” are listed in the convention program.
 - Committees – there is still time to sign up to work on a committee. The form is on the WSFC website; Nancy also had copies at the meeting.
 - Registration – WSFC is providing a \$50 “scholarship” to each member attending the convention. This reduces a member’s cost to just \$70, including all meals.
 - Solicitations – Nancy encouraged members to contact businesses they may know that might want to place an ad in the program, have a table at the convention, and/or provide some type of promotional item/items. There is an introductory letter on the WSFC website for this purpose along with a “vendor” form and ad template.
 - B Reactor Tour – Nancy has been able to coordinate special B Reactor tours, May 18, for chapter members and NARFE members attending the convention. Nancy had a sign-up sheet. A government issued ID will be needed. It must match the ID provided when signing up for the tour as it will be required for verification the day of the tour. Options include: the new enhanced Washington State driver’s license; or, the old driver’s license along with a passport or a birth certificate.

NOTE: The business meeting stopped at 12:30 p.m. for the program to accommodate the speaker’s schedule. The meeting resumed at 1:20 p.m.

- Nancy said that she and Mary Binder attended the WSFC Executive Board meeting Thursday, February 11, in Tacoma. The agenda included discussion about the upcoming NARFE convention, August 28 – September 1, in Reno. An issue that is expected to surface at the convention for a vote – one member, one vote vs. the current allocation system of chapter votes based on membership numbers. This could present challenges with the current number of e-chapter members, about 30,000, which is more than the number of members in most chapters.
- Nancy said she would be visiting the Walla Walla chapter tomorrow and the Yakima chapter next week, updating them on the convention and asking for more volunteers.
- **Directors at Large** *Steve Howes and Liz Bowers.* Steve provided highlights of the chapter tour at the McNary Wildlife Refuge, Wednesday, February 24. In summary, Steve said the tour “went really well.” The “wonderful 3-hour tour” included everything from watching what fellow federal employees accomplish within a limited budget, to seeing cooperative farming, educational activities being conducted for students who are home schooled, 10-15 thousand snow geese,

and eagles and horned owls. Comments from several tour attendees included that they did not know the refuge was there and that it was “awe inspiring.” Steve is looking at a possible fall tour.

Alzheimer’s *Chairman Bill Darke.*

- February – Bill received \$72 in donations at the chapter meeting, bringing the chapter’s Alzheimer’s account to \$104. **[Note: A balance is kept in the account to keep it open.]**
- In the current Washington federation Alzheimer’s donation year, May 1 – April 30, the chapter has donated \$2,356.
- There will be a day-long Alzheimer’s conference at Bethel Church in the Tri-Cities, March 31. For more information, call 509.456.0456, x8313.

NARFE-PAC *Chairman Steve Howes.*

- From the January and February chapter meetings, Steve said he’d received \$51 – a good start to the year.
- March is NARFE-PAC month. Steve said the wrapper on the March *narfe* magazine has good information about NARFE-PAC, including 5 reasons to give to PAC. Steve highlighted 2 of the reasons: NARFE-PAC helps elect members of Congress who understand and support the federal community; NARFE-PAC pools individual contributions to maximize their impact nationwide.
- To further encourage contributions, Steve said the board approved giving a \$25 gift certificate to a member’s restaurant of choice if they signed up as a sustainer during March. Steve had the applications; minimum monthly automatic withdrawal is \$10. Steve said the process is “painless.”
- Steve reminded members that NARFE-PAC “is our voice” with our elected officials and is solely supported through contributions. With the House up for re-election and 34 senators, along with the presidential election, this is an important election year and PAC contributions will be needed more than ever.

Legislative *Mary Binder.* Mary said that “March Madness” has taken on a new definition with all that is going on, in particular, yesterday’s Super Tuesday primary and caucus voting. On the positive side, there is increased interest in the presidential election. Mary also said that it will be interesting to get updates from NARFE Legislative Director Jessica Klement at the May WSFC convention.

Membership *Chairman Johanna Caylor.* No report.

Caller Coordinator *Pam Griffin.* No report.

OLD BUSINESS No old business.

NEW BUSINESS – Faye Vlieger asked how the chapter did on today’s food drive. Member Yvonne Sherman will deliver the monetary and food donations to the Tri-Cities Food Bank. [Note: Results will be announced at a future meeting.]

Announcements – Liz Bowers reminded members that tomorrow a number of restaurants in the area are donating all or part of the day’s proceeds to United Way.

Drawings Free lunch, Betty Maupin; 50/50, \$19, Faye Vlieger (donated to the NARFE Alzheimer’s Research Fund).

March Birthdays Steve Howes; Faye Vlieger.

March Anniversaries None reported.

Next Exec Board Meeting Wednesday, March 23, noon, Tri-City Country Club, Kennewick. All members welcome to attend.

Next Chapter Meeting Wednesday, April 6, noon, Red Lion Hotel, Kennewick; doors open at 11:30 a.m. Lunch and business meeting begin at noon; program follows.

April Chapter Meeting Program Terry and Kathy Maurer, antique appraisers, return for their annual visit with the chapter to provide an update on the world of antiques and to appraise items.

Reminder: Bring small items for appraisal, but no weapons!

MEETING ADJOURNED 1:49 p.m. after Lorie wished members a Happy St. Patrick's Day and a Happy Easter.

Program Steve Howes introduced Dr. Janelle Downs, a Tri-Cities native and a senior research scientist, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory Ecology Group. She is also co-chair of the Columbia Basin Chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society. As a plant ecologist, she conducts research on arid and semi-arid ecosystem dynamics from individual organism to landscape scales.

Dr. Downs first provided information about the Columbia Basin Chapter, Washington Native Plant Society. The chapter is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3), organization that typically meets monthly. The society also conducts field trips and hikes, and does restoration and salvage work, e.g., on Badger Mountain and at Horn Rapids. More information is on the chapter's website, www.cbwnps.org, including tour information.

Dr. Downs next provided a presentation titled "Protecting and Preserving Washington's Native Heritage." She shared that "conserving and preserving native flora" is a primary focus. Her presentation highlighted what has happened to native shrub steppe and the concern across the Intermountain West with the sagebrush ecosystem. While at one time there was focus on getting rid of sagebrush to create grazing land for cattle and sheep, the focus now is to try to save the sagebrush. (She reminded the group that tumbleweeds and sagebrush are NOT the same!) Dr. Downs spent time talking about "cheatgrass," an "invasive alien plant species" that ends up "altering the fire regimes. It is a significant problem. And when asked if evolution is involved in what has been happening, Dr. Downs replied that "all is evolution" but we are "speeding things up when we do not know what we are doing." She concluded her presentation with a question and answer session.

Prepared by:
Mary Alice Binder
Secretary