

NARFE Chapter 1192
November 3, 2021 Chapter Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER President Pat Turner called the meeting to order at noon, Red Lion Hotel, Kennewick, Wash. She welcomed 20 members and 2 guests to the chapter's meeting and annual NARFE Alzheimer's Research Fund fundraiser. Guests were: Marilyn Darke, member Bill Darke's wife; and, Wallapa Hendrickson, member Wally Hendrickson's wife. She said it was good to see everyone; thanked members for attending; thanked the board for stepping up and all its work during the year; and, thanked Mary Binder for the table decorations each month.

Pat asked members to stand, led the Pledge of Allegiance, and then asked members to remain standing for a moment of silence for our:

- Outgoing and incoming elected officials.
- Veterans and their service, especially on Veterans Day, November 11.
- Military and civilians defending and protecting our country, and for all our leaders.
- First responders who are putting their lives on the line each day.

OFFICER/FEDERATION/DISTRICT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

President *Pat Turner.*

- Chapter elections will be conducted under "New Business" later in the meeting.
- Reminders – Check the chapter website, www.narfe1192.org, for minutes, newsletters, meeting programs, updates, etc., and also the WSF website, www.narfewa.org. Pat said both have "a wealth of information." She also recommended members "take advantage of the many NARFE benefits." She said, "It is amazing what is out there for members if they take the time to check."

Vice President *Nancy Crosby.* Nancy said she is scheduled to meet with the Red Lion catering representative on the 10th to discuss the chapter's 2022 contract with the hotel. No guarantees but she said she will be trying to keep the lunch price the same as this year, \$20; however, with costs rising, this may not be possible. She said she will also be focusing on the guaranteed minimum number, which is currently 15. So far this has not been an issue as we have had more than that number at the luncheons, but it could be. The chapter would have to pay the difference if the guarantee was not met. Regarding the menu, contact Nancy with ideas/suggestions.

Treasurer's Report *Liz Bowers.*

- Liz reported that as of November 2, the chapter's combined checking and savings accounts balance was \$16,817.27, down from \$17,309.71 as of October 2.
- Regarding the 2022 chapter budget, Liz said the draft is still pending as she is waiting until she receives November deposits.
- **Monies collected at the November meeting** Lunch, \$380; Alzheimer's Research Fund, \$2,440; NARFE-PAC, \$11; 50/50, \$22 collected/\$11 awarded and donated to the NARFE Alzheimer's Research Fund. General donations, \$0.

Secretary *Mary Binder.* For Faye Vlieger, sunshine coordinator, Mary reported the following updates since the November/December chapter newsletter:

- Members Sig Preston and Cora Baldwin, lost their younger sister, Hilda.
- Member Phillip Craig recently lost his wife, Joan Carolyn.

Newsletter/Public Relations *Mary Binder.*

- November/December chapter newsletter – finalized, distributed and posted to the chapter and federation websites. No one indicated they had not received their copy.
- Senior Times Expo, Tuesday, October 20, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Southridge Sports & Events Complex. Besides Mary, several other members also indicated they had driven to the event and did not get a "goody bag." Mary said she later learned the planners ran out of bags at 11:30, so shut down. Hopefully the spring event, Tuesday, April 18, will be in person.

- The Tri-City Regional Chamber of Commerce monthly lunch/meetings:
 - Mary said the October 20 meeting, State of the Cities, was very interesting and informative – many projects are underway and/or planned throughout the Tri-Cities. The meeting is now on YouTube.
 - For November, the meeting will be the Chamber’s annual Diversity Summit, November 15-17. Many guest speakers are scheduled. Contact Mary if you want to attend and she’ll provide the registration information.
- A reminder: The annual Combined Federal Campaign runs through January 15.
- A reminder: The 2022 NARFE Photo Contest entry deadline is February 28. The theme is “America in Focus.” Contest details are in the November *NARFE Magazine*, page 68.
- A reminder: Information about the 2022 NARFE/FEEA Scholarship Program is in the November *NARFE Magazine*, page 70. [Note: Graduating high school seniors related to NARFE members – children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, step-children, etc. – who are planning to attend college in 2022 are eligible to apply. Applications will be available beginning November 4; entry deadline is Thursday, March 24.]

WSF *President/Legislative/NARFE-PAC Chair Steve Roy;*

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

- For WSF President Steve, VP Mary reported:
 - As of Monday, President Steve reported that \$1,495 had been donated in honor of Rich Wilson, past Region IX and WSF president, who passed away September 7. This exceeds the minimum \$1,000 needed to have Rich’s name added to the NARFE Wall of Fame. Mary thanked members who contributed. President Steve will provide Rich’s wife, Christine, the list of NARFE members who contributed.
 - There will be a virtual federation president’s meeting November 9.
 - A reminder – the call for amendments to NARFE’s bylaws or standing rules ends November 19. This is preparatory to the NARFE biennial conference, August 21-23, Westin Kierland, Scottsdale, Arizona. While the chapter and federation typically do not submit amendments, Mary said she still wanted to remind members about the upcoming suspense date and the opportunity to do so.
 - The next virtual federation board meeting is December 2, starting at noon. All members welcome. Contact Mary for more information.
- DVP I Mary. See information below.
- Alzheimer’s Chairman Lorie:
 - Thanked members for their support to this year’s Walk to End Alzheimer’s.
 - Overall, contributions are down, primarily due to many chapters still not meeting. In answer to Lorie’s question about chapters meeting, Mary said that in Eastern Washington, 2 of the 6 chapters are still not meeting; one only has 3 or 4 members attending; one is trying to meet at least once before the end of the year; and, the other 2 – Spokane and the Tri-Cities – are meeting monthly. It is the same on the western side of the state, that is, a mixture of meeting and not meeting.
 - Lorie reported that NARFE has reached its \$14M donation goal, as reported in the November *NARFE Magazine*. To note, a new goal has not been set, which typically is done during the biennial NARFE conference.

Legislative *Mary Binder.*

- Federal update:
 - Mary emphasized the importance of continuing to contact our legislators. She shared that recently at the Washington Policy Center’s annual Eastern Washington dinner and fundraiser, October 15, she and Liz had an opportunity to talk with Congressman Dan Newhouse and thank him for recently co-sponsoring H.R. 82, The Social Security Fairness Act, which would repeal GPO and WEP. Newhouse said that he

knew the repeal was important to her. Mary said that she'd talked with the congressman about this legislation on several occasions, including providing the impact to her personally, and to many others. Mary shared that this is an example of how personal contacts and sharing stories can impact legislators' decisions. While co-sponsorship is not the same as legislation being passed, it is a step forward.

- Changes are coming to the TSP program, including an app for members to check their accounts on mobile devices. Mary has a recent Government Executive article highlighting the changes, should anyone need.
- State update – Mary provided additional information on the Washington Policy Center Eastern Washington recent annual event at The Davenport Hotel, Spokane. Mary said she was able to attend both a lunch and the dinner. Food and service were excellent, and amazing considering more than 1,000 people attended the dinner. Dr. Ben Carson, former HUD secretary during the Trump Administration, was the guest speaker. His wife, Candace, also attended. Both are still very active and involved in many things. [For example, Dr. Carson founded the American Cornerstone Institute. One of its programs is “Little Patriots.” It is “a free, online resource to use to teach children civics lessons, history, and American values at home, in the car or after school.”] Liz added that it was the best organized such event she's attended. It was well run and ran very smoothly. The only negative was individuals talking when they should have been listening. Mary said she addressed this issue with a WPC representative in a follow up after the event.

NARFE-PAC *John Wetterling*. John prepared a report for the meeting, highlighting information from the NARFE-PAC reports for the 3rd quarter, which ended September 30. Highlights include:

- Region IX [smallest in population of NARFE's 10 regions], is 9th in contributors but 1st in the mean contribution and 4th in the number of sustainers.
- Within Region IX and its 5 federations, Washington is 1st in contributors, amount given and sustainers but ranks 4th in the mean contribution.
- In looking at Washington State, and the other 49 states and Washington, D.C., our state is 9th in the number of contributors, 6th in amount given, 4th in sustainers, and 9th in mean contributions.
- Comparing our chapter with the other 15 in the state, we were 1st in sustainers, tied for 7th in the number of contributors and 6th in the amount given.
- Through the 3rd quarter, \$852,649 had been donated to NARFE-PAC, \$406,500 disbursed, and NARFE members had attended 43 fundraising events.
- John noted that while the mean contribution amount had increased during the 3rd quarter, the number of sustainers had declined.

John concluded by saying that overall, the chapter was doing good in supporting NARFE-PAC.

Alzheimer's *Larry Williams*.

- The local Walk to End Alzheimer's was Sunday, October 10. The chapter's team had 6 members with 5 attending the event and doing some or all of the walk. The chapter raised \$520 for Alzheimer's. This money stays local but counts toward the NARFE Alzheimer's Research Fund goal.
- Today's meeting program is the chapter's annual “white elephant” fundraiser for the NARFE Alzheimer's Research Fund.

Webmaster *Larry Williams*.

- At last month's chapter meeting, Larry asked for a volunteer to serve as his “webmaster” back up. Member Randy Grekowicz volunteered after that meeting. Larry will work with him to get him up to speed on the website. A thank you was extended to Randy for volunteering.
- Larry reminded members to look at the website for chapter meeting minutes, newsletters, meeting programs and menus, etc.

Service Officer *Ellen LeVee*. Ellen reminded members that this year's FEHB program open season runs from November 8 thru December 13. She said OPM is providing 3 ways for members to make health benefits changes, should they want to do so: online; via an express phone number (contact Ellen if you want the number); and, by writing to the OPM processing center. Ellen provided several other open season updates:

- The Spokane chapter will be meeting in person and virtually Monday, November 8. Social time is at 11:30 and the meeting and program begin at noon. Anne Ozuna, a federal retirement expert [and Spokane chapter member] will provide an overview of FEHB program plan changes. Contact Ellen or Mary Binder for the link information. Mary shared that she attended Anne's virtual presentation last year and found it helpful. She said she would also work to get Anne's PowerPoint presentation and have Larry post it on the chapter website.
- There will be a WSF-wide virtual health fair Monday, November 22, at noon. For those who receive NARFE electronic messages, they will receive more details on the event. Mary added that this will be a webinar-type format and there will be time for questions/answers.
- Ellen reminded members about the one local in-person health fair November 30, 8:30 to 10:00 a.m., Federal Building. Ellen said she believes the health fair will be in the lower-level cafeteria space and that picture ID is required to enter the building. In answer to a question about also having proof of COVID vaccination, Ellen said she did not believe that was needed. She said she has been in the Federal Building several times and only needed picture ID.
- Ellen reminded members about 2 upcoming NARFE health-benefits-related webinars:
 - Thursday, November 4, 2 p.m., ET, "Which FEHB Plan is Right for You."
 - Thursday, November 18, 2 p.m., ET, "So Many Choices: Which FEHB Plans Work Best with Medicare A & B?"
- There was some discussion about the importance of reviewing plans and what they offer. For example, Blue Cross/Blue Shield is providing \$50 via a credit card for those who have been vaccinated for COVID. Pat said there is \$100 in wellness credits for completing a survey and Blue Cross/Blue Shield is providing up to \$2,500 every 2 years for hearing aids.
- A member asked what happens to a member's health benefits if their plan is cancelled and they aren't aware of that happening/don't make a change. Does the member lose FEHB program coverage? [Note: After the meeting, Ellen researched the question. This is a common question, per information in the October *NARFE Magazine*, pages 46/48. "... In the event of a plan termination, if you don't proactively make an election during Open Season, by regulation, the employing agency (if employed) or OPM (if retired) will enroll the employee/annuitant in the lowest cost nationwide plan."]

Membership *Johanna Caylor*.

- NARFE's 2021 Fall Membership Drive runs thru December 31. Johanna reminded members that membership numbers are dropping. She encouraged members to think about family members and/or friends who are eligible for membership and encourage them to join. [Members receive \$10 for each new member they recruit during the drive and are entered into a drawing for prizes. Details are in the September *NARFE Magazine*, page 46, with an update in the November magazine, pages 68 and 72.]
- Although there was no in-person health fair in Walla Walla at the Corps of Engineers facility this year, Johanna said she made a trip there recently to drop off NARFE magazines and membership applications. She said it is challenging to get information to the employees.
- Distinguished members – Johanna reported that 6 chapter members are eligible in November/December for this distinction. NARFE will mail certificates and related material to out-of-area members directly. This will save Johanna time and the chapter will not be paying the mailing costs.

Sunshine *Faye Vlieger*. See Secretary's Report.

Caller Coordinator *Darleen Wall*. Nothing to report.

Old Business Pat reminded members to contact Nancy Crosby if they had questions or issues with the Red Lion. She is now the chapter's single point of contact with the hotel's catering office. Pat said that is working well as there is less confusion.

New Business Election of chapter officers for the 2-year period, 2022 thru 2024. Pat asked Mary Binder, nominating committee chairman, for a committee report. Mary reported that all 4 current chapter officers agreed to serve another 2-year term. Announcements about the elections and asking members to consider serving were in the July/August, September/October and November/December chapter newsletters. Announcements were also made at the September and October chapter meetings. No additional members volunteered to serve. The slate of officers is: Pat Turner, president; Nancy Crosby, vice president; Liz Bowers, treasurer; and, Mary Binder, secretary. Mary provided Pat a copy of the report for the secretary's records. Pat then asked if there were additional nominees. There were none so she accepted the slate of officers as provided. A copy of the report is attached to these minutes.

Announcements

- Pat said the hotel back doors will now be locked so members should park in the front and use the front entrance.
- Johanna announced that military retirees can have their ID cards updated/remade at the Yakima Training Center. She has the contact phone number should anyone need it.
- John said that while watching this week's Monday night football game, played in Kansas City, he noticed many GEHA signs in the stadium. GEHA, one of the FEHB program providers, started in and is still based in Missouri. [Note: See article, "Chiefs and GEHA Announce Naming Rights Agreement for GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium, March 4, 2021, at: <https://www.chiefs.com/news/chiefs-and-geha-announce-naming-rights-agreement-for-geha-field-at-arrowhead-sta.>]

Open Discussion No open discussion.

Free Lunch Drawing Dave Langstaff.

50/50 Drawing Lorie Bennett, \$22/collected; \$11/awarded and donated to the NARFE Alzheimer's Research Fund.

November Birthdays Liz Bowers.

November Anniversaries Randy/Fia Grekowicz.

Next Chapter Virtual Board Meeting Monday, November 15, 10 a.m. All chapter members welcome. Non-board members – contact Nancy Crosby if you want to attend and she will send you the Zoom link.

Next Chapter Meeting Wednesday, December 1, Red Lion Hotel, Kennewick. Doors open at 11:30 a.m. for social time; meeting begins at noon followed by the program. If the meeting is changed to virtual:

- Previous virtual meeting attendees will be automatically notified;
- For those new to virtual chapter meetings, they will need to notify Nancy to be added to her virtual meeting notification list;
- Meeting changes are announced in emails, posted on the chapter website, or made by the callers for local members who are on the meeting call list.

December Chapter Meeting Program Jeff Peterson and his mellow trumpet are scheduled to return to the chapter to provide a holiday music program – both during the social time and after the chapter meeting. (***POC: Liz Bowers***)

Closing Remarks *President Pat.*

- Reminder: Daylight Saving Time ends Sunday, November 7. “Fall back” clocks one hour.
- Reminder: Veterans Day, November 11 – a holiday to celebrate and a time to say “thanks” to all our veterans. Randy asked how many veterans were at the meeting. Besides Randy there were 3 others – Chuck Clayton; Jim Partridge; and, John Wetterling.
- Reminder – Mask up, remain vigilant, and always, family first.
- Have a happy and safe Thanksgiving, and then Pat said, “I will see you at the December meeting!”

MEETING CLOSED 1:03 p.m.

Prepared by:
Mary Alice Binder,
Secretary

CHAPTER MEETING PROGRAM The chapter’s annual “white elephant” fundraiser for the NARFE Alzheimer’s Research Fund was the meeting program. Several tables contained numerous and a wide variety of items – from donated bottles of wine to hand-quilted fall-themed placemats, jigsaw puzzles, artwork and more. Nancy Crosby and Lorie Bennett were the big winners – each one having the winning tickets for several items! Total raised for the research fund – from individual checks and the fundraiser – was \$2,440.