

NARFE News Tri-Cities Chapter 1192



NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES (NARFE) ASSOCIATION
ADVOCATES FOR CURRENT AND FORMER FEDERAL EMPLOYEES!!

VOLUME 2005, ISSUE 3

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2005

MEETINGS: 1ST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH @ 11:30 AM, RED LION HOTEL AT COLUMBIA CENTER - KENNEWICK
NO MEETINGS - JULY & AUGUST

PRESIDENT REPORT (Joe Kuhns) Fall weather is here and it is a welcome change after a hot summer. I hope you are all well and ready for NARFE activities including some excellent planned meeting programs for the fall and winter.

As we head into fall and winter activities, I wish the Federation Convention 2006 Planning Committee success in the production of a very successful convention to be held here in Richland, May 15-18, 2006. Much work and planning have already gone into this endeavor and it seems to be right on track, thanks to the many people involved.

Chapter 2005 Executive Board
President-Joe Kuhns, 586-6848
Vice President-Carl Gallion,
967-9161
Treasurer-Verneice Skinner,
627-2053
Secretary-Loretta Slettene,
627-1788
Sunshine & ImedPastPres.-
Anne Ross, 586-3355
Alzheimer's-Lyell Bingham,
946-9444
Greeter-Marguerite Rosson,
582-5995
Legislative-Pierre Saget
NARFE-PAC-Bill Darke,
375-7757
PR Chair-Hazel Elliott
542-9296
PR-Co-Chair-Vicky Ravely -
Service Officer-Carl Gallion
(Protem) 967-9161
Membership/Newsletter-
Johanna Caylor, 375-0739/
308-6664 Cell
2006 Convention Treasurer-
Bob Lindsey, 582-5441
Program Co-chair:
Clark Crouch-946-1558 &
Carl Gallion-967-9161

Please plan to attend our chapter meetings. We will have interesting and worthwhile programs and will welcome your attendance.

PUBLIC RELATIONS (Hazel Elliott) I would like to thank you for putting your trust in me as a replacement for the Rizzo's. It will take me some time to get into this new assignment. If any of you have some ideas you want to share with me along the way, you can reach me by email: belliott@worldnet.att.net. I will be communicating with the monthly telephone callers – by email to those with computers, and those without computers by “snailmail.”

CHAPTER NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM REPORT (Joe Kuhns-Chapter President)
I would like to mention briefly the two-day Regions VIII and IX Management and Development Symposium conducted at the Peppermill Hotel and Casino by the National Officers September 27-29, 2005, in Reno, Nevada. Over 200 people were in one three seven three attendance including 4 of us from Chapter 1192. The theme was sharing experiences, building relationships, and implementing ideas. The topics were: recruiting and retention, leadership and development, chapter communications, and meetings/activities. Experienced practitioners called “jump starters” led the series of four sessions, three of whom were from the Washington State Federation, with input by many of the participants. It was deemed to be a very successful effort and is planned to be repeated. I would say the primary emphasis was on recruiting and retention, but there were many other topics of equal or greater concern. You may wish to refer to the National Secretary Davis Sullivan's report for more information on page 62 of the October 2005 NARFE Magazine. He was in charge of the four symposiums held across the country in Macon, GA., Harrisburg, PA., Reno, NV, and Denver, CO. I took some rather detailed notes on the proceedings and would be happy to share them with the Chapter Executive Committee or any others who might have an interest in efforts to make changes for possible improvements in the chapter activities and/or operation.

IMPORTANT NEWS FROM NARFE, September 21, 2005

NARFE DEPLORES PLAN TO OFFSET HURRICANE RELIEF BY CUTTING THE EARNED RETIREMENT AND HEALTH BENEFITS OF FEDERAL WORKERS BY \$11.5 BILLION

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) President Charles L. Fallis today denounced the House Republican Study Committee's (RSC) proposal to reduce the retirement annuities of federal workers and require many of them to pay a higher share of their health insurance premiums.

The RSC's "Operation Offset" paper, released today, suggests that future federal retirees with less than thirty years of service pay a higher percentage share of their Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) premiums than others. The government/employer contribution for FEHBP premiums is 72 percent of a weighted average, and employees and retirees pay the remaining 28 percent. According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimate of this proposal, "the government's share of premium costs would be cut by 2 percentage points for every year of service less than 30. In the case of a retiree with 20 years of service, for example, the government's contribution would decline from 72 percent of the weighted average premium to 52 percent." Such a retiree would pay about \$2,700 more in 2006 than an employee or retiree with 30 or more years of service if they were enrolled in an FEHBP Blue Cross/Blue Shield standard option family plan.

"Not only would these proposals dishonor the government's obligations to its workers, but it also makes public service a much harder sell to talented and skilled persons in today's mobile workforce," Fallis said. "How ironic is it that this committee would offset Katrina relief by cutting the earned economic and health security of the very federal workers that are laboring to get Gulf Coast businesses and residents back on their feet."

"Most of my generation worked for the same employer for our entire careers, but those days are gone," Fallis observed. "This proposal runs counter to every innovation made in employee compensation in the last 20 years aimed at making benefits portable and enabling workers to move to employers where they are needed the most."

In addition, the RSC paper recommends that the federal civilian annuity calculation be based on the highest five years of salary instead of the highest three years. The CBO estimates that this would result in future Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) retirees receiving "\$1,400 less in 2006 and \$7,300 less over five years than under current law."

Fallis concluded, "Federal workers and annuitants have dedicated, and continue to give, so much for our nation and our ideals. NARFE urges the Congress not to use this recent natural disaster as an excuse to sully their service by reducing the retirement and health benefits which are rightfully theirs."

NARFE, one of America's oldest and largest associations, was founded in 1921 with the mission of protecting the earned rights and benefits of America's active and retired federal workers. The largest federal employee/ retiree organization, NARFE has a membership of nearly 400,000 men and women and represents the interests of nearly 2.3 million federal employees, retirees, spouses, and survivors.

NARFE-PAC (Bill Darke-Chairman): **"We don't accomplish anything in this world alone... and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the weavings of individual threads from one to another that creates something."** Sandra Day O'Connor

I think this quotation represents the essence of NARFE-PAC. As individuals we aren't likely to have much influence on the decisions of our Congressional representatives in Washington D.C. Thus, the way to have influence is to band together in support of our agenda. There are different ways of doing this. One way is through organized mail campaigns such as the one a couple of months ago where we were sent postcards on the cover of the NARFE magazine and asked to mail them to our Senators and Representatives. The thousands of us that did that had more influence than if a few of us did it on our own. Another way to enhance our influence is by contributing to NARFE-PAC. Our contributions are gathered together to create a sizable fund to promote our agenda. In this way seven four one five we can help ensure that our agenda items are brought to the attention of Congressional representatives for their consideration and support. For a contribution of \$15, you will get a lapel pin that identifies you as someone who cares about our issues and is willing to put some money toward their adoption. Please contribute, and wear your pin proudly!

LEGISLATIVE (Carl Gallion-Protem) For this edition, I'm sitting in for Pierre Saget, our Legislative Chairman, who is doing a "yeoman's job" of giving care to his dear wife (Lois, we wish you strength and comfort in your fight for good health). As Pierre would caution us. "Be Vigilant!" World situations and events make our legislative concerns even more in a state of flux. Our country stands ready to extend a helping hand to the many unfortunate Americans who suffered greatly in the hurricanes of 2005... particularly in the Mississippi Louisiana region with the destruction caused by storm Katrina. All Americans should share in offering relief to help these people. But one of the prime targets to capture dollars is the retirement benefits of the Federal sector. Lowering the Government's share of the Federal Health Benefits, delaying or canceling COLAs, and recalculating retirement formulas to reduce annuities are all targets against current and future retirees.

Please join us in standing up for our earned benefits. Especially vulnerable are our CFEs who are contributing so greatly by leading the rebuilding efforts after this terrible storm. Call, write, e-mail or FAX your Representative or one of your Senators. Let them know you **do not want our earned benefits denied or changed.** We need your help to get this message to Congress. Updated information is always available on the NARFE web site, www.narfe.org/

Local Addresses are:

Senator Maria Cantwell (D)
Federal Building, 825 Jadwin Ave. Rm G58A
Richland, WA 99352
509-946-8106 / 509 946-6937 - FAX
206-220-6400 OR 202 224-3441 (DC)
E-mail: Maria@cantwell.senate.gov
<http://cantwell.senate.gov>

Senator Patty Murray (D)
402 E. Yakima Ave. Suite 390
Yakima, WA 98901
509-453-7462 / 509-453-7731 - FAX
202 224-2621 (DC) OR 206 553-5545 Seattle
E-mail: Senator_murray@murray.senate.gov
<http://murray.senate.gov>

Representative Richard "Doc" Hastings (R)
Tri-Cities Office, 2715 St. Andrew Loop - Suite D
Pasco, WA 99301
509-543-9396 / 509-545-1972 - FAX
202 225-5618 / 202-225-3251 - FAX
WebSite: www.house.gov/hastings

DOC HASTINGS PASCO TOWN HALL MEETING Several Chapter 1192 members attended Docs Town Hall Meeting at the TRAC this summer (Aug. 15) including Bob Stewart, W. Connie Johnson, Sig Preston, Johanna Caylor, Joe and Jolene Kuhns.

PROGRAM CHAIR (Co-Chair Clark Crouch & Carl Gallion): **November 1, 2006** – Sandy Gamble, Income Tax Strategies and Election of 2006 Chapter Officers. **December 6, 2006** – Installation of new 2006 Officers and bring canned food for Tri-Cities Food Bank.

REMINDER: 2006 47th Convention will be here in Richland – hosted by Chapter 1192 Tri-Cities – District V **2007 48th Convention** will be in Silverdale – hosted by Chapter 181 Bremerton – **District II Co-chairpersons are urging you to reserve your rooms early.** **2008 49th Convention** will be in Walla Walla, hosted by Chapter 239, Walla Walla – District I

HIDDEN NUMBERS – The unclaimed hidden numbers in the last issue were: **Sharyn Jones (4897), Dave K. Jones (2826), and James (Jim) R. Lewis (7968).** Sorry! These hidden numbers are the last four digits of members ID#. There are three (3) new hidden numbers in this issue. If you read the newsletter on our website – be sure and look closely for your number!! Print and bring it to the next November or December NARFE Chapter Meeting and you will receive \$5.00 OR if you live out of state - mail the section with your ID # to Newsletter Editor and you will receive a \$5.00 reimbursement.

ALZHEIMER'S REPORT (Lyell Bingham) On behalf of Chapter 1192, I would personally like to thank a couple of members – an anonymous donor at our October meeting of \$100.00 check and a brand new member (not yet on our monthly reports) who turned in his Application along with a D/W form and a \$40.00 check for Alzheimer's PLUS our other generous monthly donations from luncheon attendees. Thank you all again.

NARFE NEWS FROM YOUR SERVICE CENTER (Carl Gallion, Acting): As Fall settles in our lives, it's time to remind us of a few important decisions we need to make. **First** is our Open Season on Health Insurance. Between November 14th and December 12th is the period for changes. While rates will increase for 2006 by an average of 6%, many of the popular plans will be higher. Be sure to read all the material that will be sent to you and check all your options. The 2006 Health Fair will be held in the Richland Federal Building Lobby (see notice elsewhere in newsletter) and you are welcome to "shop and compare" the various plans on display and collect information... plus stop and say HI to our NARFE representatives who will also be there. **Second** of course is Election Day. Don't forget to exercise your right to vote and be sure you are registered. Read the published election materials to make your own decision on the important issues and candidates. Many of our election districts have elected to use absentee ballots. Be sure to mail or deliver them in time to be counted.

Just announced is our COLA for 2006. Based on their formula, most of us will be entitled to a 4.1% increase in

January with some FERS retirees receiving a slightly lower amount.

Don't forget to utilize our Service Center. We can help you with eight five seven three many of your benefit status changes. We're located in the Richland Federal Building, 825 Jadwin Ave., Room # 137, and open on Tuesday mornings 9:30 am-12:00. Special thanks to all the dedicated folks who help us "man the center" on your behalf. Please direct your questions "after hours" to me as your Acting Service Officer. My home phone is 509-967-9161, or you can reach me at cbgallion@aol.com.

SUNSHINE NEWS (Anne Ross) Cheer Up/Thinking of You/Get Well Cards were sent to several members/co-workers "under the weather" since last issue. Please call 586-3355 to notify me of anyone you feel may need cards. **Sympathy and Condolences** to the following NARFE family members and/or co-worker: Sharyn Jones (L), Estella Mendoza (bro-in-law passed), and Ragnar (Rags) Nowakowski,

NEWSLETTER (Johanna Caylor-Editor): MEMBERS with email capabilities—**your newsletter will be posted on our website www.narfe1192.org**. All you have to do to receive your email copy to go to your internet and type our website name and you will find a link to click on and there it will be. IF you receive a hard copy of the newsletter and you have a computer, please send me an email and I will delete your name from the mailing list. It will be posted to our website for all members to read and/or download. (Editor)

MEMBERSHIP NEWS (Johanna Caylor) **WELCOME** to our new chapter members **JULY thru SEPTEMBER 2005**: J. J. Dippel*, John Hamilton*(USPS), and Bernice L. Martin. **Reinstated members**: : Kathy Andrews-Smith*, Morton Carrothers, Carl Frick, Nadine Frindrich, Christine Jackson*, Don Segna, Joe Sutey, and A. W. Fenstermacher (H) **Transfer In**: Desirae Haase (from CA-0587) **Transfer Out**: Robert B. Green (to CO-1085). **RECRUITERS** include Nancy Schreckhise & Carl Gallion

Dropped members – the following is a list of "dropped members" the past 6 months or so. If you know any of them, maybe a personal phone call from you will encourage them to renew their membership. Frederick W. Bartel, Lawrence T. Brighton, Roy D. Broumley*, Daniel D. Button, Thomas H. Davies*, Kathleen Garvin, Bruce D. Ginther*, Audrey Goodbrake, Barbara Greer, Juliet I. Hinojosa, Dennis J. Kent, Margaret Lampton, Michael J. Lawrence, Lenore M. McGovern, Patti Morehouse, Larry G. Musin, Mary Ann Ophardt, Gil M. Ramin*, Annabelle Risher, John M. Silko*, Patricia A. Slape*, Jean Smith (wsu.edu), Edna Sadler, Edith Stolz (LSA), Ron Tolman, John S. Treadwell*, Monty Ward, Gary L. White*, James L. Wiford*, will receive this newsletter in hopes that you will reconsider your choice and renew your NARFE membership. If you have misplaced your renewal slips, mail your \$39.00 checks to Johanna (return address) for transmittal to the National Office.

While on the subject of Membership - Some members have relocated and moved out of state. It would be helpful when you change your address, **please give the person you talk to at 1-800-456-8410 - your new phone number and new area code.** **NEW INCENTIVES MEANS MORE MEMBERS** – REMEMBER, there is still an **\$8.00 rebate for signing up CFE's**. The new dues structure is still a bargain to be kept

2006 FEDERAL HEALTH FAIR

WELCOME ALL FEDERAL EMPLOYEES, RETIREES, AND ANNUITANTS

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD, 2005

8:00 to 9:00 A.M.

SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE, KENNEWICK

10:00 A.M. TO 12:30 P.M.

FED. BLDG. LOBBY, 825 JADWIN AVE., RICHLAND

2:00 TO 4:00 P.M.

STEVENS CENTER, RICHLAND

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS AND WANT TO TALK TO HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS – THIS IS THE TIME TO DO SO **AND COME BY AND VISIT YOUR LOCAL SERVICE CENTER, ROOM 137.** COME IN THE FRONT DOOR (JADWIN AVE) NO BADGES REQUIRED BUT THERE IS AN IDENTIFICATION CHECK-POINT - -PARKING JADWIN & KNIGHT STREET, ACROSS STREET FROM POST OFFICE. NARFE MEMBERS WILL BE AVAILABLE WITH HANDOUTS AND ANSWER YOUR NARFE QUESTIONS

NOMINATING COMMITTEE The Nominating Committee (Verneice Skinner, Sigrid Preston, & Carl Gallion) presented a slate of officer candidates at the October 5th Meeting to be elected at the November 2nd Meeting. After elections and installation of officers at the December 7 Meeting, committee chairs are appointed by the new president. The 2005 Nominating Committee presents the following nominees for office for 2006:

President:	Joe Kuhns, Incumbent Clark Crouch
V – P	Carl Gallion
Secretary:	Loretta Slettene, Incumbent Anna Risley
Treasurer:	Verneice Skinner

Ballots will be handed out at the November meeting. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor. We hope many of you will attend this important meeting. If you need a ride, please call Carl – 967-9161.

SPEAKING OF KATRINA VICTIMS Are you aware that two of Chapter 1192 members were possibly affected by Katrina? They are: Charles Bustamante, (former Richland INS Employee) who resides in Covington, LA (near New Orleans) and former Tri-city resident Linda Montoya (L) formerly worked at the Richland Post Office, who moved to Pass Christian, MS last year. Member Vicki Ravely worked with Linda and is trying to get more information as to her situation after Katrina. Our thoughts and prayers go out to our members as well as the other hurricane victims.

NARFE-FEEA AID TO VICTIMS OF KATRINA

The NARFE-FEEA Natural Disaster Fund (supported by NARFE members and administered by the Federal Employee Education and Assistance Fund) can pay out grants up to \$500 per NARFE household to reimburse NARFE members for losses stemming from Hurricane Katrina or other natural disaster. As this article is being written (August), the NARFE-FEEA Natural Disaster Fund currently has a balance of approximately \$30,000, which may not last too long if we get the number of applications we are anticipating. Tax-deductible donations can be sent to the NARFE-FEEA Natural Disaster Fund by sending a check to FEEA, 8441 W. Bowles Ave., Suite 200, Littleton, CO 80123. Also, credit card donations can be made online by going to the FEEA homepage at www.feea.org and clicking on the "Give Online" button at the top of the page. Select "NARFE-FEEA Disaster Relief" from the drop-down menu on the donation screen. Or you can call FEEA toll-free at **1-800-323-4140** to make your contribution.

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SYMPOSIUM AT RENO-Lanny Ross, Region IX, NFVP

First off, I want to thank everyone that took the time out of your busy schedule to join us in Reno, for what I think, was a very informative and successful Symposium. I especially want to acknowledge and thank Reno Chapter #0142 member **Don Brown** for his help and assistance in finding an excellent location for the Symposium.

This is also the place where I should acknowledge our sponsors of the reception held on September 27th. All of them made monetary contributions and they were: Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield; PacifiCare; Kaiser Permanente and GEHA. We all had a great time and want to thank them for their support. We also want to thank them for inviting us to attend their Health Fairs.

We had over 200 members join us in Reno, with the following breakdown: AZ-1; NM-1; NC-1; FL-1; OH-1; **AK-1**; HI-3; **MT-4**; **OR-16**; NV-21; **WA-27** and the remainder from CA. I also want to acknowledge and thank the California and Nevada Federation Executive Boards for agreeing to hold their meetings in Reno, NV. Their attendance insured the success of the Symposium.

For you that missed the Symposium, I can only say you passed up the opportunity of a lifetime. I realize that some of you could not attend because of a conflict in schedules, the high altitude of Reno, etc., but you still missed an opportunity. The opportunity to learn from others that might be going through the same problems your chapter might be having today. **Did we find all the answers?** Of course not! **Did we learn something that can be used back home in our local chapters?** Absolutely! **Will we use that knowledge to better our chapter operations?** Only you can answer that question.

By now, most of you know the four subjects discussed: 1) Leadership Development 2) Effective Communications 3) Chapter meetings/activities and 4) Recruiting and Retention. **However**, one of the side benefits of the Symposium was talking with chapter members from the Western States about all kinds of issues and subjects.

All of the data collected at Reno (and other locations) will be compiled into some useful document and will be shared with the membership. If I can assist Region IX members in any way, don't hesitate to contact me at: (360) 692-9741 or email: lannyjean@comcast.net

URGENT NARFE ACTION ALERT ON MEDICAID

(This article was received AFTER the NARFE News, Issue #3 went to Press)

During the next few weeks, Congress will focus on completing action on the federal budget. Known as **budget reconciliation**, this process involves setting spending reductions for entitlement programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, federal and military retirement. Currently, there are no plans in this legislation to cut federal civilian retirement. However, this fall's budget reconciliation bill will attempt to reduce spending for health care for the elderly and disabled provided by Medicaid. One of the proposals is to make it harder for people to qualify for *nursing home care under Medicaid* by changing certain rules.

We urge you to contact your Representative and two Senators through a special toll free number at **1-800-426-8073** and ask them "to oppose cuts to the Medicaid budget that would change *nursing home* transfer of assets rules." These changes will harm the elderly and disabled citizens who need this program the most.