

# NATIONAL ACTIVE & RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ASSOC. CHAPTER #108 - CHATTANOOGA, TN



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NEXT MEETING - Friday, October 13, 2006, at Wally's Restaurant, Ringgold Road at 1-75, East Ridge. This will be a luncheon meeting starting at 12:00 noon. All members, prospective members and visitors are invited. Order from the menu or enjoy the buffet. (Eat at 11:30.)

PROGRAM - We are fortunate to have with us again **Linda Holbrook**, Account Manager for the Federal Employee Program, Blue Cross/Blue Shield. She will be coming from the BC/BS office in Nashville to tell us features of the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) for the coming year. Linda always gives an informative and timely presentation well worth our attendance at this October meeting.

COLA - On September 15<sup>th</sup>, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported the consumer price index (CPI-W) for August was up **0.2** percent over the July Index. This brings the cumulative figure for the next annual COLA to **3.5** percent. The September index, which will be the final determinant for next year will be released on October 18, 2006.

ALZHEIMER'S FUND - **Mr. Dan Lorden** reports that chapter members contributed \$130 at the September meeting. This brings our year-to-date totals to \$467 for the national research and \$225 to the local Alzheimer's Chapter for care-giving, a grand total of \$692. These amounts came primarily from members who faithfully attend chapter meetings. The monthly *NARFE* magazine carries an application for direct contributions to the National fund.

HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUMS - Medicare Part B monthly premiums will increase to \$93.50 for most Medicare enrollees. However, because of a provision in the 2003 law which added a prescription drug benefit to Medicare, individual beneficiaries with incomes exceeding \$80,000 annually and couples with incomes over \$200,000 will henceforth pay substantially higher premiums. With respect to the Federal Employees

Health Benefits Program (FEHBP), the new rates reflect the lowest increase in 11 years, rising an average of but **1.8** percent. The largest FEHBP fee-for-service provider, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, lists a small decrease for its *standard* plans and no increase for its *basic* plans.

NATIONAL NARFE CONVENTION - **Margaret L. Baptiste** was elected National President. She had previously served as National Vice President and had earlier been Field Vice President of NARFE's Region III. Mrs. Baptist is a native of the United Kingdom whose late husband was a federal civil service employee, retired from the Navy's Sea Lift Command. Our own District X Field Vice President **Bill Austin** was elected National Vice President. Arizona Federation President **Nathaniel (Nat) Brown** is National Secretary and **Richard C. Ostergren** retained his seat as National Treasurer (unopposed). The proposals relating to membership and dues structure failed to obtain the requisite 2/3rds majorities to win passage. Grand Rapids, MI was selected as the site for the 2010 Convention. (Louisville, KY will host the one in 2008.)

LEGISLATIVE NOTES - Congress is now in recess while its members are engaged in the biennial scramble for re-election. On the last workday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, a continuing resolution was passed to allow government funding in the new fiscal year which began October 1<sup>st</sup>. When the scheduled Lame Duck session begins on November 13<sup>th</sup>, essential appropriation bills must be passed, leaving little time for much else to be accomplished. On September 20<sup>th</sup> Congressman **Lloyd Doggett** (D25<sup>th</sup> TX) introduced a Motion to Discharge **H.R.#147**, the NARFE-supported bill which would repeal the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision. By recess time, this petition has 120 co-signers, 98 short of the requisite 218 needed for discharge. With all Congress has on its plate, the chances for success of this effort before adjournment of the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress are very remote. Legislation aimed at improving the lot of federal annuitants must await re-introduction in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress starting next year.