



# Nashville Chapter 227, Newsletter (October 2007)

National Active & Retired Federal Employees Association

**Officers:** Bruce Thomas, President 781-6083; Nancy Wells, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President-Membership 377-9011; Helen Tyson 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President-Service 269-0614; Chris Wasson, Sunshine Chairperson 227-3064; Edna Smith, Secretary –Treasurer 298-4757; John Wells - Newsletter Chairperson 331-0705.

Chapter Web Site: <http://www.narfetn-nashville.org/>

NARFE's mission has remained the same since 1921, to protect and improve the retirement benefits of federal retirees, employees and their families.

**September Meeting:** Meeting was called to order by President – Bruce Thomas at 1PM. New members and guests were welcomed. The invocation was given by Tom Duncan, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance lead by Val Brooks. There were 29 members in attendance. Mrs. A.D. Denny and member William Hardwick attended for the first time. Also there was an impromptu visit by Bob Clement, asking for our vote in the mayoral election.

The Jackpot drawing of \$26 was won by Vernia Stewart (\$13 to Vernia and \$14 to the chapter treasury). The \$3 was won by Faye Sandifer and the \$2 by Val Brooks, both donated to the Alzheimer fund. The complimentary lunch voucher from Piccadilly was won by Johnie Hosfield.

**September Program:** Our program was a report on the status of plans for the Federation Convention which the Nashville Chapter will host in April 2008. There were no verbal Committee reports.

**October Program:** Speaker will be Kristina Thomsen, retired Vanderbilt Emergency Room nurse, speaking on Home Health Care options that are available to seniors. This should be of interest to all chapter members. **October is NARFE National Chapter Meeting Month. Attend your chapter's October meeting and bring a colleague!** Plan to be there at the Piccadilly Cafeteria at 874 Murfreesboro Pike, Nashville TN (615) 367-4640

**TN Federation Convention:** President Thomas and 1<sup>st</sup> Vice - President Nancy Wells gave an in depth report on the plans for the convention which will be held at Montgomery Bell State Park, April 28 & 29, 2008. The registration fee is \$45; the room rate is \$60 per night plus tax. The deadline for registration is March 15, 2008. Main committee chairmen have been appointed and the need for chapter members to assist them and take an active part in the convention is requested.

**Treasurer Report:** Current balance in Checking is \$1,758.09, Credit Union account is \$904, for a Total of \$2,662.27.

**Status of Current Legislation:** as of September 2007

## 1. Repeal of Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP)/Government Pension Offset (GPO)

**H.R.82** now has 325 (74.7% of the House) no change from last month. *Tennessee non cosponsors are Jimmy Duncan, Jim Cooper and John Tanner.* We have 435 representatives in Congress, so with 323 cosponsors we have 74.3% as cosponsors

**S.206** now has 35 cosponsors, up one from last month (*none of the Senators from Tennessee are cosponsors*). We have 100 Senators in Congress, so we have 35% cosponsoring.

The other version of WEP Modification, **H.R. 726**, now has 13 cosponsors, no change from last month (*none of the Representatives from Tennessee are cosponsors*).

In addition **S.1254** to Modify GPO has eight cosponsors, same as last month (*none of the Senators from Tennessee are cosponsors*).

## 2. Premium Conversion

**H.R.1110** now has 260 cosponsors, up 18 from last month, *Tennessee non cosponsors are Jimmy Duncan & John Tanner.* **H.R.1110** Has cleared the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee and is in the Ways & Means Committee, Charles Rangel is the Chairman, and John Tanner is a member of this committee.

**S.773** now has 47 cosponsors, up one from last month (*none of the Senators from Tennessee are cosponsors*).

See page two for more Chapter News

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### **NARFE APPLAUDS PASSAGE OF PREMIUM CONVERSION BILL IN COMMITTEE**

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) President Margaret L. Baptiste praised the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, especially Chairman Henry Waxman (D-CA) and Ranking Member Tom Davis (R-VA), for favorably reporting legislation (H.R. 1110) today that would allow federal and military retirees and active duty personnel to pay their health insurance premiums with pre-tax earnings.

"Federal and military retirees lose ground every year health insurance premiums skyrocket," NARFE President Margaret Baptiste said. "The premium conversion benefit helps federal workers pay for their health insurance and this tax relief would also enable federal annuitants living on fixed incomes to bear this burden."

The tax code allows public and private employers to permit their workers to pay for health insurance with pre-tax wages excluded from both income and Social Security payroll taxes. The executive branch began offering premium conversion plans to their employees in October 2000 and Congress extended the tax benefit to legislative branch workers in January 2001. Federal annuitants are not eligible to participate.

"Many federal employees don't even know they enjoy an average tax savings of about \$820 a year because Premium Conversion is an automatic benefit handled by their employing agency. In fact, they may not know they have it until it is gone when they retire," Baptiste added. "That's why federal workers who will want premium conversion in the future -- when they'll need it the most -- should be fighting for it now by helping us support this important legislation."

"We are grateful to Congressman Tom Davis for championing this important legislation," said Baptiste. "This is only one of many steps in a lengthy journey," she added, "but a very positive one nonetheless. And, because of the importance of this bill to retirees, NARFE is determined to keep pushing until we reach the finish line - enactment." Because it amends the tax code, the legislation must also be passed by the House Committee on Ways and Means or included by the panel in a larger tax bill.

### **COLA - CPI-W DECREASES 0.2 PERCENT IN AUGUST**

On Wednesday, September 19th, the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics ([www.bls.gov/cpi](http://www.bls.gov/cpi)) reported the consumer price index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers. The CPI-W for August is 203.2, down 0.2 percent from the July index. For purposes of calculating the next COLA (cost of living adjustment), the index is 2.2 percent higher than the third quarter average base index in 2006 (199.1). The BLS web site provides answers to frequently asked questions at <http://www.bls.gov/cpi/cpifaq.htm>

Former federal employees now receiving monthly benefits under provisions of the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA) receive a COLA based on the change in the CPI-W during each calendar year. The August index, 203.2, is 3 percent higher than the December 2006 index of 197.2. Amid intense media coverage, September consumer price indices will be released Wednesday, October 17th which will determine the 2008 Cost-of-living adjustment for both the Civil Service Retirement and Social Security programs.

**Membership:** In August we have 2 new members, 1 prospective new member, 7 sent 2<sup>nd</sup> notice and 4 dropped for non renewal and 2 members reinstated.

NARFE, The largest federal employee/retiree organization, NARFE represents the retirement interests of nearly 5 million current and future federal annuitants, spouses, and survivors.