



# NARFE Chapter 870 Newsletter

Volume III, Number 3

September 2009

Published Quarterly

Vivian Fivecoat, President - Charlie Gardner, 1<sup>st</sup> VP - Bernice Hirsch, 2<sup>d</sup> VP - (Vacant), Sec'y - Sandra Simms, Treas - JC Whitney, Membership/Svc Meetings held 2<sup>d</sup> Thursday of Month at Golden Corral Restaurant, 2811 Wilma Rudolph Blvd., Lunch 2:00-3:00 PM, and Meeting 3:00 -4:00 PM

## President's Corner



Chapter 870 just completed our annual banquet and from all accounts it was an awesome affair. For those that attended it was a time of renewal of family, friends and commitment to each other, to NARFE, and to this chapter. Our chapter is at a cross roads of sorts and the decisions each of you make will determine our very existence and more importantly if we move into the future as a strong political voice for all federal retirees and employees not only in this area but for the organization as a whole. Over the next few months you will be asked to vote your conscience on several issues to include unified dues, a slate of officers to lead and guide you and our chapter for the next year. Your votes on these very important issues should be guided by what is best for the organization and not be swayed by personal agendas. Just like national elections your votes on these upcoming issues requires thought and commitment and I am asking you to make that commitment.

The current decline in NARFE National membership has GOT to be REVERSED! Sometimes we lose members through their own personal circumstances and sometimes we do it to ourselves through thoughtless words and actions either way the result is the same lost members. One set of circumstances we have no power to change; the other set we absolutely have control over so together let us work towards resolving differences and welcoming the uniqueness of each member of NARFE. If our toothless tiger is to have sting in his/her bite, we need to be one cohesive organization. Remember God and the hard work of our founding organizers gave us this organization to grow and cherish let us all commit to those ideals. Everyone has something that will benefit the chapter and the organization.

A course of action that must start occurring now is the recruitment and retention of younger actively employed federal workers. We are an open organization so I ask you to invite your friends, neighbors, family to our monthly meetings where they can find out about our chapter and its awesome activities. Call your friends and neighbors you never know who may have ties to the federal government and who could be a potential member. Don't throw the baby out with the wash as they say. Without an increase in National membership totals, we are no more than a toothless tiger that has lost his voice, a mere social club with an excuse to get together for dinner once a month.

A second course of action, in order for our tiger to get up and grit his teeth and to roar like the mighty king of the political jungle that he should be, is to become very politically active through phone calls and letter writing. This edition of our newsletter contains instructions and letters that can be used to contact our current Senators and Representatives. Let your voice be heard simply by picking up the phone making a two minute phone call or signing the enclosed letters, stamping them and then dropping them in the mail slots. We, as an organization, have not had any meaningful legislation passed in years and I don't know about you but I think it is time

to reverse that trend and be HEARD, LOUD AND CLEAR!!! We earned our benefits, we and our families sacrificed years to support the growth and sustainment of the federal government and our military so now we need to be heard. No other industry is asked to do, to sacrifice, to risk more, is more penalized than the federal retiree. This should not happen in today's America. Please copy and mail the letters and then follow up with a simple phone call. Let us all make our tiger ROAR!

Finally our nominating committee is seeking any member that would like to serve as a leader for the next year. Please submit your name to one of the committee members, Ronni Reid, Lora Whitney, and Dale Sims. WE NEED YOU and I am asking as your soon to be immediate past president to make that commitment.

God bless you all and thank you for your friendship and support

Vivian Fivecoat, President

## NARFE National Dues Referendum Vote

Next month the National Office of NARFE will be sending ballots to all Chapters for a vote on an important issue that will affect the annual dues we pay to National and our Chapter. I am sure that you have heard about it if you have attended our meetings in the past 2 months and it has been featured in the NARFE Magazine as well. It is an issue that is important to all of us, and it bears our attention and careful review before we cast our votes.

The stated purpose of the change is to provide a standard dues fee for all NARFE members and eliminate the introductory dues fee of \$33 when anyone first joins NARFE. The following year, the dues must change to include the National dues and Chapter dues. Many believe that this causes confusion when a member joins at one rate and then the following year it increases to accommodate the new dues format. In some cases, it is a significant increase and National has found that many drop their membership due to the significant change in dues and the misunderstanding of how the change occurs. Currently, the National dues are \$29 plus whatever the Chapter dues may be. In our case the Chapter dues are \$5, so the amount we pay totals \$34. Many Chapters pay much more and some pay a little less, but it is also a book-keeping problem for National to keep track of every Chapter's dues at billing time.

National is proposing a referendum vote to change all dues to a standard unified rate of \$40 for everyone. That amount will be distributed to the Federation and Chapters as follows: our Chapter will receive \$9 (versus the \$5 we now receive), the Federation will receive \$4 (versus the \$2.90 it now receives) and National will retain the \$27 balance (versus \$29 they now receive). The \$9 Chapter fee was decided upon as an average of what all Chapters now pay. Some pay as little as \$3 or \$4, while the highest is \$15 per year. There will be a discounted rate of \$36 for those on Dues Withholding as well as lower

rates for those who pay in multiple years. Check the NARFE magazine for detailed information, as there is not space for all the fine points of this referendum.

The most obvious and apparent disadvantage to the proposal is the increase in dues for most of our Chapter members from \$34 to \$40. There may well be some who will decide to drop their membership for that reason alone, without considering the advantages it offers. The most favorable factor for us is the increase in dues our Chapter will receive that can be used for many beneficial programs. It would increase our budget for membership recruiting and efforts to support legislation issues. It could be used to help pay some of the costs for our delegates and officers to attend conventions and training seminars. Of course, there is the stated reason for the change; the standard rate will apply and eliminate the confusion of dues that could result in members dropping their membership. But for me, the reason to adopt the new dues is the financial boost it gives the Federation and Chapters. For most of us, the increase is a mere 50 cents per month!!!

The ballots will be mailed to the Chapters in September and we must return our ballots by a December deadline. Our Chapter will have 5 votes to submit. The votes will be tallied sometime in January and the new dues rates, if adopted by a 2/3rds vote of the membership, will be placed into effect by midyear of 2010. The Chapter Executive Board will set the date for the Chapter vote and it will be announced soon. The decision is yours to make, so it is especially important for all members to come to the meetings, do your homework and participate in the discussion and vote. If you have any questions you may contact me or any of the officers for assistance.

Chapter 870 will vote on the referendum at the October meeting. Please consider attending this meeting so that your voice can be heard.

*Charles Gardner, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President*

## Trip to the Roxy

Our own Roxy Theater right here in town have some wonderfully entertaining productions. We are planning to attend a musical comedy there on September 24. The show, **THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE**, is a hilarious musical about six adolescent outsiders vying for the spelling championship of a lifetime. For those of you who do not know where the Roxy Theater is--it is on Franklin Street. The play begins at 7 pm and the cost is \$20 per person. If you would like to dine together before the play at one of the restaurants on Franklin or another close to downtown, let me know and we will decide on a place and meet for dinner before the show. **Please call Sandra Simms, 647-6551 for reservations or more details NLT 1 September.**

Also, we are planning a Christmas outing, but nothing specific yet. We will let you know in plenty of time to work another fun time into your December plans.

*Sandra Simms Treasurer*

## Welcome New Members

**Shirley Carter    Gerald (Jerry) Hirsch    Donald Johnson**  
**Joseph Knight    Liz Galbreath**  
**Nancy & Sherman Lawson**

## Membership Report

Our current membership is 220; since our last newsletter we have gained 7 new members and only lost one. I have found a new, and faster, way for members to re-new their NARFE Membership. All you have to do is call 1-(800) 456-8410; give them your member number (found on your address label of your NARFE magazine); they will bring up your record; you give them your credit card number, and they instantly update your records and you're good to go for another year. The renewal rate is \$34.00 (unless you're still working and got in under the "old" dues). This way, ya'll don't have to look for a stamp, envelope, and make a trip to the mail box or post office. It's quick, fast, and very very efficient. Try it and you'll agree.

*JC Whitney, Membership Chair/Service Officer*

## Members We Will Miss

**Virginia McDonald passed away 20 July 2009**

## Legislative Report

Chapter 870 is in need of a new Legislative Officer. If you are interested or would like to nominate someone for this position, please contact Vivian Fivecoat, 931-206-2729.

Among the pages of this Newsletter, you will find a "pull out" sheet on how to contact your Senators and Congressmen. You are encouraged to telephone, e-mail or write your legislators to let them know what issues are important to you. We have provided sample paragraphs that address the issues that NARFE supports.

*Ronni Reid, PR Chairman*

## Nominations and Election of Officers

A nominating committee has been appointed to seek members who are interested in serving the chapter as president, 1<sup>st</sup> vice president, secretary and legislative officer. The nominating committee members are Ronni Reid (648-4393), Lora Whitney (358-4855) and Dale Simms (647-6551). If you are interested in serving the chapter in any of these positions or would like to nominate someone, please contact one of the committee members as soon as possible.

Election of the officers for 2010 will be held at the November meeting. The successful candidates will be installed at the December meeting.

*Ronni Reid, PR Chairman*

## Annual Dinner Big Success

A big "thank you" goes out to all who made our annual dinner a success. In particular Fatima McElveen who entertained us before dinner with some 50's country songs; Scott Simms who performed after dinner as "Elvis"; and Jacob Robertson who set up the sound system and coordinated the music for "Elvis". Everyone who had their picture taken in the "'57 Chevy" can pick up your photos at our September meeting.

## COMMUNICATING WITH SENATORS AND CONGRESSPERSONS

We encourage everyone to frequently (*say once a quarter or even once a month*) e-mail and/or phone your elected officials. To do this, NARFE headquarters provides a toll free telephone number to the capitol switchboard. To contact the Washington office of your senator or representative call this number 1-866-220-0044 and ask for his or her office by name, or if you do not know who your representative is, tell them your city and state or zip code and they will look it up. Note: postal mail, because of security concerns takes weeks to reach officials in Washington so emails and telephone calls are better.

Each of your legislators maintains offices in Washington DC and in their districts. For you convenience, we have included this information at the bottom of this page.

To keep current on the latest legislative information, go to the NARFE national website and sign up to receive the weekly GEMS messages via email. You can also call the toll free Hotline number 1-877-217-8234 to hear the weekly hotline message.

Many legislators do not list their email addresses, but you can go to the Federation web site ([www.NARFETN.org](http://www.NARFETN.org)), click on the Legislative tab, and scroll down until you see



Use this handy box to write an email message to your elected officials. Enter your zip code and click **GO!**: You will see a list of your elected officials, and then click email under their picture. You can choose from selective topics or compose your own message.

Senator Lamar Alexander  
3322 West End Ave., Suite 120  
Nashville, TN 37202  
Phone: 619-736-5129  
FAX: 615-269-4803

Senator Bob Corker  
3322 West End Ave, Suite 610  
Nashville, TN 37202  
Phone: 615-279-8125  
FAX: 615-249-9488

Congressperson Marsha Blackburn  
1850 Memorial Dr.  
Clarksville, TN 37043  
Phone: 931-503-0391  
FAX: 931-503-0393

Congressman John Tanner  
Room B-7  
Federal Building  
Jackson, TN 38301  
Phone: 731-427-4848  
FAX: 731-427-1537

The following are samples paragraphs for your letters to support NARFE Legislative agenda:

To Senators Alexander and Corker

Re: Premium Conversion, S.491

As a constituent, voter and member of National Active and Retired Federal Employees (NARFE), I urge you to 1) cosponsor and 2) work for passage of legislation, S. 491, to allow Federal civilian and military retirees to pay health insurance premiums on a pre-tax basis. Introduced by Sen. Webb on February 26. S. 491 has the strong support of the Federal-Postal coalition and the Military Coalition. In fact, 50 of the 61 cosponsors of identical 110th Congress legislation, S. 773 sponsored of identical 110th Congress legislation, S. 773 sponsored by Sen. John Warner, continue to serve in the 111th Congress. I look forward to your written reply. .

.....

Re: GPO and WEP: Support S. 484

As a constituent, a voter, and a member of National Active and Retired Federal Employees (NARFE), I ask you to support and help pass S. 484, legislation introduced by Senator Dianne Feinstein. This bipartisan bill would entirely repeal the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). I lose earned Social Security benefits due to the federal annuity I also earned through my years of public service.

In addition to federal retirees, the Social Security Offsets unfairly threaten the income security of other public-sector retirees, such as police, teachers, fire fighters and state and county workers, who also fully contributed to the Social Security system. At a time when the government is focusing its efforts on retention of qualified personnel, the GPO and WEP discourage talented individuals from entering public service.

Please support S. 484, the Social Security Fairness Act of 2009 and eliminate the penalty for public service.

---

Congresspersons Blackburn and Tanner

Re: Premium Conversion: H.R. 1203

As a constituent, voter and member of National Active and Retired Federal Employees (NARFE), I ask you to urge House Ways and Means Committee Chairman, Charles Rangel, to include H.R. 1203, Federal and Military Retiree Health Care Equity Act, in comprehensive health care reform legislation the Committee is currently considering.

.....

Re: GPO and WEP: Support H.R. 235

Thank you for supporting H.R. 235, Representatives Howard Berman's and Buck McKeon's bipartisan bill to repeal the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). I lose earned Social Security benefits due to the federal annuity I also earned through my years of public service.

In addition to federal retirees, the Social Security Offsets unfairly threaten the income security of other public-sector retirees, such as police, teachers, fire fighters and state and county workers, who also fully contributed to the Social Security system. At a time when the government is focusing its efforts on retention of qualified personnel, the GPO and WEP discourage talented individuals from entering public service.

I appreciate your support of the Social Security Fairness Act of 2009. Please work for enactment of H.R. 235 to eliminate the penalty for public service.

Chapter 870 gratefully acknowledges the businesses that generously support our Newsletter. If you know of any business who would like to be included in our Newsletter, please have them call Lora, 358-4855; Ronni, 648-4393; or Priscilla, 645-3936.



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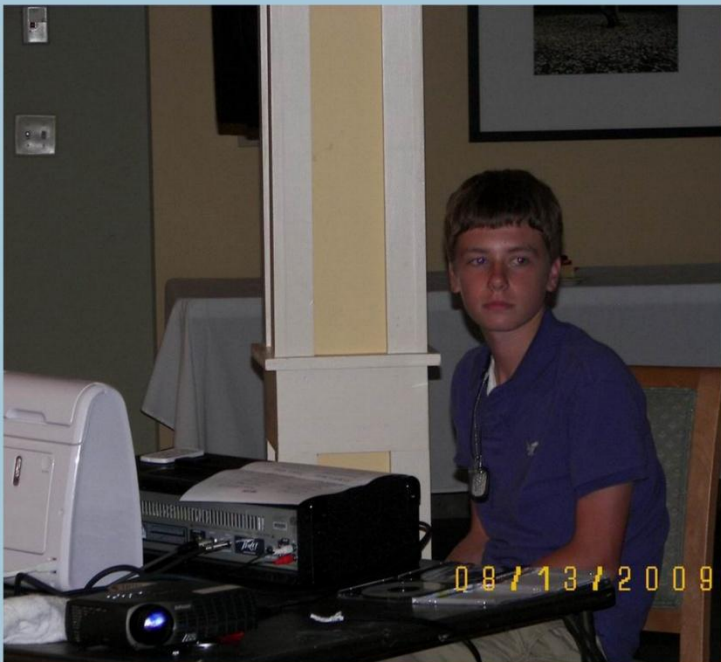
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 Priscilla, 648-3936



## FEBH Open Season

The next Federal Employee Health Benefits Open Season runs from **November 9 through December 14, 2009**. You can enroll in, make changes to or cancel a current health enrollment. You can also enroll in, make changes to or cancel a current enrollment in the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) during Open Season.

**You must submit your Open Season enrollment change before midnight, Eastern Standard Time, on December 14 to be considered timely filed.** Open Season enrollment changes take effect the first day of your first full pay period in January. You can find more information in the FEHB Handbook located at WWW.OPM.COM. Annuitants can call 888-767-6738 for more information and current employees can contact their Service Benefits Coordinator at their work location.

## Chapter 870 Calendar of Speakers

Join us at Golden Corral. If you'd like to have a late lunch, the Golden Corral has a special for \$6.99 (including beverage) from 2-4 PM weekdays. You may prefer to pay for your dinner when you arrive for our 3 PM meeting and enjoy their delicious steak and evening entrees after our meeting for the same price. Our speakers for September and October are of interest to us all. In November we will have election of officers.

September – Speaker-Representative from Social Security

October – Speaker-Representative from Blue Cross/Blue Shield  
Voting on Membership Dues Referendum

November – Election of officers for 2010

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**Join us for our September meeting and luncheon on September 10, 2009 at Golden Corral Restaurant, Wilma Rudolph Blvd, Lunch 2:00-3:00 PM, meeting 3:00-4:00 PM.**

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National Active and Retired Federal Employees  
2603 Delano Drive  
Clarksville, TN 37043