



Important Tip

The most important tip to keep in mind during the colder months is to ask for help. If you need to clear your property of snow and ice, don't hesitate to ask a family member or neighbor, or hire a professional. Arrange rides to the grocery store and doctor's appointments. Many communities have shuttle services specifically for seniors. Don't be afraid to reach out for help.

Wintertime certainly poses challenges for seniors, but with a bit of planning and awareness, you will stay healthy and experience the joys of springtime soon enough.

Thank you for maintaining your membership

Wow! It hardly seems possible that another year has passed. On behalf of the federation, I would like to take this opportunity to express gratitude to all of our current loyal members for maintaining your membership in NARFE and to all of our chapter officers for your dedicated service the past year. I would also like to congratulate the chapter officers elected to serve for the current year. Whether you are serving for the first time or adding another year of faithful service, thank you for your commitment to support NARFE and lead your chapter in the position to which you were elected.

This is the first time in NARFE history that a year has begun with only two national officers. On November 1, Richard Thissen began his first term as our National President and Jon Dowie began his first term as our National Secretary/Treasurer. And so began the first step in the Future of NARFE (FON) Committee's plan to transition NARFE into a strong, financially sound organization attractive to current and potential members. Unfortunately, little reported progress was made with the development of the model for Future NARFE between the release of the committee's report and recommendations in February and the National Convention in August. That should change soon. A standing Strategic Planning Committee will be appointed by President Thissen no later than February 15, 2015, and hopefully the initial sense of

urgency that was apparent in Orlando at the Federation Presidents meeting in July 2013 can quickly be rekindled. Due to unanswered questions to several concerns, I am anxious to see more details about the proposed new organizational structure.

According to NARFE Legislative Director Jessie Klement, the outlook for the Federal community is grim as a result of the recent elections. The federal community will definitely have a target on its back and legislation advocacy is of prime importance in 2015. Some of the potential threats include the Chained CPI, increased retirement contributions, pay freezes, elimination of the FERS supplement and calculating retirement benefits based on the highest five consecutive salary years.

The Federation sponsored Member Recruiting Contest ended on December 31. As of the end of October, we had a first place tie with one recruit each between Carey Frazier, Jerry McDuffie, Larry Minniear, Carla Perry, Monty Ray, John Shannon, Joyce Knott, Oscar Krosnes, Donald Smith, Larry Futral, Margaret Wooten and Carolyn Cribbis. For inquiring minds that want to know, the board has approved a plan for handling ties and it will be announced in the March edition of the Federation Newsletter. This is the last status report for the contest and winners will be announced during the Federation Convention in April.

Other drawings to be held during the

Continued on page 2



Tennessee Federation Officers

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Thank you (continued)

convention are listed for your information as follows:

1. Recruiters who recruited at least one person during the contest period will be eligible to win \$25. This lucky recruiter does not have to be present to win.

2. Any recruiter present at the convention who recruited at least one new member during the contest period will be eligible to win a free nights lodging at the convention hotel or equivalent.

3. All new members who joined NARFE between January 1 and December 31, 2014 will be eligible for a prize of \$25. The winner does not have to be present.

Before we know it, our 59th Annual State Convention will convene April 20 - 21, 2015 at the Riverview Inn in Clarksville, Tennessee. I know that Sandra Simms and the folks of Clarksville Chapter 870, Dickson Chapter 727 and Jackson Chapter 519 are working hard to make this one of our best conventions ever and I am looking forward to a great event. If you plan to attend, please let us know as soon as possible. A 2015 Delegate Form with self explanatory instructions is included in this newsletter and a handy interactive version is posted for your convenience on the "LIBRARY" page of the Federation Website at www.narfetn.org. Resolutions must be received by the Federation Secretary at least 60 days prior to the convention and each chapter should submit a list (not credentials) of the names of their delegates by January 15. The Federation Executive Board has authorized a registration incentive for the convention this year. A drawing will be held and all federation members who preregister by February 1, 2015 will be eligible to win a free nights lodging at the Mainstay Suites in Pigeon Forge. A Registration Form can be found in this newsletter and on the Federation Website. In addition, paper copies of the Delegate Form and Registration Form were mailed to each Chapter President or contact in late

December.

I am very pleased to announce that Region X Vice President Bill Shackelford has appointed Federation 2nd Vice-President Rhonda Mooney to serve as the Region X Membership and Marketing Coordinator. Congratulations to Rhonda, I am sure that she will be a tremendous asset to this vital NARFE program.

I was reading a magazine a few months ago and one of the articles was about a trip on the Dalton Highway to Alaska's North Slope. The road was built to support construction of the Alaska Pipeline and is better known as the "Haul Road." It said the motto of the Haul Road is, "Be prepared to take care of yourself." That made me think of a Federation Newsletter article several years ago in which Past Federation President Carey Frazier said, "I do not have the money or the knowledge to walk the aisles of Congress to persuade them to protect my benefits as a federal employee, whether active or retired." I suspect that few of us do, so the best way we can be prepared to take care of ourselves - protect our benefits and pension or pay - is to support NARFE. Every day highly qualified professionals report to work for the most effective advocacy organization on Capitol Hill and often walk the aisles of Congress while working on our behalf. What a reassuring thought!

Please remember our less able senior members. If you did not have an opportunity to send a card, make a telephone call or visit during the winter holiday season, it is not too late. Any time is the right time to reach out and brighten someone's day.

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High Hopes for 2015

In 1959 songwriters Jimmy Van Heusen and Sammy Cahn wrote a song called "High Hopes" for the 1959 movie *A Hole In The Head*, which starred Frank Sinatra and was directed by Frank Capra.

The song won an Oscar for Best Original Song, and it even showed up in the successful 1960 Presidential campaign of John F. Kennedy. The lyrics were changed to cheer on Kennedy, with the first lines: "Everyone is voting for Jack 'cause he's got what all the rest lack. Everyone wants to back - Jack, Jack is on the right track."

The lyrics of that song came rushing back to me when I learned NARFE's star Treasurer, Richard Thissen, had been elected President of NARFE. Thissen has been a shaker and a mover behind some of the best decisions NARFE leadership has made over the past few years, so putting him in a leadership position to carry out those decisions, and perhaps institute even more on behalf of the membership chapters of NARFE just seems like a natural progression.

Some of the complaints I've heard since the Regional Conference at Pigeon Forge, and the National Convention in Florida, had to do with "not enough information on NARFE's Future" and "what are the solutions to our problems," and "where are we going?"

The very beginning of those Jimmy Van Heusen and Sammy Cahn lyrics start out, "Next time you're found, with your chin on the ground ... There's a lot to be learned, so look around. Just what makes that little old ant ... Think he'll move that rubber tree plant ... Anyone knows an ant, can't ... Move a rubber tree plant."

BUT, then we're told ... "But he's got high hopes, he's got high hopes He's got high apple pie, in the sky hopes ... So any time you're gettin' low ... 'Stead of lettin' go ... Just remember that

ant ... Oops there goes another rubber tree plant!"

Leading up to the Florida convention, amidst all the wonderment and confusion, I heard from NARFE Chapter and Federation leaders across the country, filled with ideas, nearly overcome with the chance to put into practice the management planning ideas they had succeeded with as federal employees. They were not willing to throw in the towel, and I am certain that is still true.

That's one of the reasons I urge our membership to attend their Federation, Regional, and National Conventions, because you will be rubbing elbows with some very energetic and creative people looking for the same answers you are, and some of the best solutions come from knocking ideas around with the same goals in mind.

Federation President Larry Henderson has been in contact with our new NARFE President, asking questions and looking forward to new answers about NARFE's future. But if you don't hear anything right away, don't let worry and confusion set in. Just remember Frank Sinatra's ant and that rubber tree plant, and hold onto those high hopes we have for the future of NARFE in 2015. Because as NARFE goes, as your support and communication to your political representatives goes, so goes the future of our earned retirement and medical benefits.

In the meantime, as Chapter members let's ensure we take good care of each other. Remember, it's "mission first, but people always." NARFE cares.

- Ed Evans

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Tennessee Federation Officers (Continued)

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Hoping for a year of positive changes

It's hard to believe that 2015 is already here. I hope that everyone will have a great year. I also hope that this will be the year that we see some good changes for NARFE. I think progress has already been made towards that goal. I have been happy with the changes that I have seen. Other folks that I have talked with are also optimistic and feel that things appear to be on track for a good year. I thought the November and December 2014 NARFE magazines were some of the best in a long time. National President Richard Thissen acknowledged that NARFE needs to appeal to a new generation while not alienating our current loyal members. He pledged to close the gap between Headquarters and the field and I hope to see that happen. With all of us working together we can have a great NARFE!

A good step towards a great NARFE is increased membership. The larger our number of members the louder our voice will be heard on Capitol Hill. If you know someone who is a potential member please contact them and explain the benefits of NARFE membership. Advocacy is one of our most valuable benefits - we all want our hard earned benefits protected - but there are also many other benefits of membership. The Federal Benefits Service Department, NARFE magazine, discounts on Choice and Wyndham hotels and on Alamo and National rental cars, and the NARFE-FEEA scholarship are a few of the many other benefits and can be a good selling

point when you're talking to a potential new member.

One of our own, Donna Briggs, who is a member of Millington Chapter 1382, was recognized at the 2014 National Convention in Orlando as one of the top recruiters in NARFE. Donna recruited 26 members during the two year period between the 2012 and the 2014 national conventions. Congratulations, Donna and thanks for your hard work!

Remember that you receive a 15% discount on your national dues when you have dues withholding. If you don't want dues withholding you can still receive a discount on your national dues by renewing for multiple years. You receive an \$8 discount when you renew for two years or an \$18 discount when you renew for three years.

When making plans to attend the 2015 Federation Convention in Clarksville be sure to preregister by February 1, 2015 so that you will be entered in the drawing to win a free night's lodging at the Mainstay Suites in Pigeon Forge. I have stayed at that Mainstay Suites and it is very nice. I'm going to make sure to preregister by February 1 so that I'll be in the drawing!

Rhonda Mooney
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Cleveland Chapter 860

Larry Minniear - 1st Vice President, TN Federation

Danny Britt - Secretary/Treasurer, Chp 860

Dan Herron - President, Chapter 860

Jim Polier - Vice President, Chapter 860



Knoxville Chapter 204



Service Officer Herb Arnett and wife Kathy ring the bell for the Salvation Army. Several members from Knoxville Chapter 204 spent time ringing the bell during the holiday.

Things are heating up on the legislative front

Our president, Richard Thissen, in his latest magazine article, told us how things have changed in Congress and members there have advised us that we need to be ready for major fights to preserve our benefits. Many of the concerns we have faced in the past are still on the possible list and will probably move through both the house and the senate at a more rapid pace.

However, another possibility exists. In the senate sixty votes are still needed to stop filibusters and even more votes are needed to override a presidential veto (67). If compromise is still not included in the mix, not much is expected to change. Two scenarios have been proposed by some for what is likely to get done in Washington in the next couple of years: not much, and nothing at all.

Still, we need to pay attention to what outcome eventually evolves. David Snell, our expert in NARFE's national office listed some of the possibilities on a recent appearance on "Your Turn with Mike Causey." David thought the most likely issues to be brought up again were:

Chained CPI, the method of determining our COLA each year, which could over a federal employees' lifetime, reduce our pension up to \$50,000 from the current method, the CPI-W. NARFE is suggesting a more accurate method would be the CPI-E, the method designed specifically for the elderly.

Elimination of the FERS annuity supplement, which was promised to those employees who switched from CSRS back in the 80's and should not be changed.

Changes to our health benefits, which I think would be the most detrimental to all of us, retirees and current workers. A voucher system has been proposed in the past which experts say would drive young people into cheaper plans and raise the rates for others.

There are many other possibilities that have surfaced in the past such as more pay freezes, increased retirement contributions, and of course, the switch from "High Three" to "High Five."

The CBO has also just released a suggestion for a "smaller workforce" by replacing only one in three federal employees who leaves the workforce.

Senator Ron Johnson, incoming chairman of the Senate Homeland and Governmental Affairs Committee feels federal employees are overpaid, even after a three-year pay freeze, and it is unrealistic for public sector employees to believe they are immune to modifications to our pay and benefit packages. He will have more influence in his new position, making it more difficult for us.

With all these threats possible in the new Congress we need to step it up in our efforts, asking for help from our legislative staff in national office when we need it, and using all the resources on our website that are available for advocacy and dealing with public relations and our legislators.

Let me know if I can help in any way. My contact information is below.

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NARFE Appointed Positions (Continued)

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Public Relations Officer

Vacant

Special Project Officer

Vacant

Chattanooga Chapter 108



Collection for Toys for Tots at Chattanooga Chapter 108 meeting on December 12.

DELEGATE FORM (Top Portion-mail to Federation Secretary)
2015 NARFE STATE CONVENTION - APRIL 20-21, 2015

Please print or type:

Chapter No: _____ Chapter Name: _____ Location: _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Delegate _____ Alternate _____ Proxy for Chapter _____

I wish to serve on the following committees: Membership _____ Legislation _____ Credentials _____ Service Officer _____
Public Relations _____ Rules _____ Nomination _____ Resolutions _____ Constitution & Bylaws _____ Financial Ways &
Means and Audit _____ NARFE-PAC _____ Alzheimer _____ Time & Place _____

Would you like to attend legislative training at the Convention? _____

Signature of Chapter President or Secretary _____

-----Cut delegate form in two separate pieces-----

DELEGATE FORM (Bottom Portion-bring to the Convention)
2015 NARFE STATE CONVENTION - APRIL 20-21, 2015

Please print or type:

Chapter No: _____ Chapter Name: _____ Location: _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Delegate _____ Alternate _____ Proxy for Chapter _____

Signature of Chapter President or Secretary _____

INSTRUCTIONS:

If you plan to attend the Convention as a delegate or alternate, fill out both the top and bottom portions; Chapter President or Secretary must sign. Leave blank the "Proxy for Chapter". Please return top half to the Federation Secretary, **Merilyn Evans, 808 Sandburg Place, Nashville TN 37214. The Delegate will carry the bottom portion to the Convention and present it to the Credentials Committee.**

If no one from your Chapter will attend, please find someone from another chapter who will serve as your proxy. The name and address of the person serving as proxy should appear above and the "Proxy for Chapter" should have your Chapter number. The Chapter President or Secretary should still sign. The top half should be mailed as outlined above and the bottom half sent to your proxy to be carried to the Convention and presented to the Credentials Committee. If there are any questions, please call Larry Henderson at 731-784-0675.

59th Federation Convention April 20-21, 2015 Clarksville, Tennessee

All federation members who pre-register for the convention by February 1, 2015 will be eligible to win a free night's lodging at the MainStay Suites in Pigeon Forge.

Riverview Inn
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Hosted by Clarksville Chapter 870
Dickson Chapter 727
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