



12 ways to keep your brain young

Every brain changes with age, and mental function changes along with it. Mental decline is common, and it's one of the most feared consequences of aging. But cognitive impairment is not inevitable. Here are 12 ways you can help reduce your risk of age-related memory loss:

1. Get mental stimulation
2. Get physical exercise
3. Improve your diet
4. Improve your blood pressure
5. Improve your blood sugar
6. Improve your cholesterol
7. Consider low-dose aspirin
8. Avoid tobacco
9. Don't abuse alcohol
10. Care for your emotions
11. Protect your head from injuries
12. Build social networks

- The Harvard Medical School

Henderson provides convention details

On August 19, I had the pleasure of attending the 5th Annual West Tennessee Joint Chapter Meeting hosted by Jackson Chapter 519. I thoroughly enjoyed the meeting and there was a good turnout representing seven West Tennessee chapters. I am most appreciative to Federation Vice-President Rhonda Mooney and the Jackson Chapter for all of the work they did to host the meeting this year and many thanks to the officers and members of the participating chapters for your outstanding support of this annual event. I am especially grateful to Federation Legislative Chair Jim Glenn for making the long drive over from McMinnville and for the excellent legislative update that he gave us.

The next day I was on my way to Orlando, Fla., for the 33rd Biennial National Convention on August 24-28 at the Rosen Centre Hotel. The National Executive Board and Federation Presidents met for a couple of days prior to the convention.

NARFE's 1,275 chapters had a total voting strength of 5,139, and there were 1,122 chapters (88%) represented by delegates or proxies carrying 4,822 votes (93.8%) to the convention. Tennessee delegates or proxies represented 32 (94.1%) of our 34 chapters and carried 72 votes (97.3%) of our total voting strength of 74. Delegates from Tennessee were Larry Minniear of Chattanooga Chapter 108, Bill Bolt and Larry Cunningham of

Knoxville Chapter 204, Carey Frazier of Nashville Chapter 227, Rhonda Mooney and Carlos and Lynn Henning of Jackson Chapter 519, Larry Henderson of Tri-County Chapter 806, and Jim Glenn of Warren County Chapter 2035. Region X Vice President Bill Martin kindly served as the proxy for three of our chapters, and his service is included in the above statistics.

Resolution BC-02: To reduce the number of National Officers from four to two was adopted with 82.16 percent of the votes cast. Consequently, we elected a National President and a Secretary-Treasurer. The National Secretary-Treasurer position was uncontested, so it was filled by acclamation, but the 3-person race for National President was decided in a runoff because none of the three received more than 50 percent of the vote on the first ballot.

The following persons were elected to serve as our National Officers for the next two years: President Richard G. Thissen of Lake Ozark, Mo., and Secretary-Treasurer Jon Dowie of St. Augustine, Fla.

In the runoff, Richard Thissen received 2,972 votes and Ken Thomas received 1,863. Also unopposed was William Shackelford of Centreville, Va., who was elected Region X Vice President by acclamation. He will serve the federations of Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

For the first time, all resolutions to

Continued on page 2

Tennessee Federation Officers

President

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Henderson (Continued)

amend the Bylaws were decided by a ballot vote; even the ones the Bylaws Committee recommended for rejection. Only three of the 14 submitted were adopted. With the exception of BC-02 which was mentioned above, they are listed for your information as follows:

14-02. Move social members to chapters (bylaw reference to social members be moved to the chapter section of the bylaws).

14-19. If a revision of the bylaws is under consideration, no amendments to the current bylaws will be considered.

Other numbered resolutions that were adopted are listed as follows:

BC-04. Authorize NARFE HQ staff to make grammatical and other technical corrections to the NARFE Bylaws and Standing Rules before the publication goes to print.

14-01. Developing the Vision for Future NARFE.

14-36. eNARFE membership should be listed last as an option in all future membership applications, along with the words: "email address strongly recommended."

14-38. Establish a single online blog for all NARFE.

14-24. The legislative program should include a formal position on campaign finance reform, which will allow NARFE to support legislation that "attempts to address campaign finance inequities."

Additional resolutions that were adopted are listed as follows: Establishment of a standing Strategic Planning Committee no later than February 15, 2015; calling on members to add a request for increased federal funding for Alzheimer's research when they contact their members of Congress for any reason; and setting policy for the use of voting "cheat sheets" at future conventions which will provide only the resolution number and complete title.

Although only a majority vote was needed for adoption, Resolution 14-01

authorizing the national Executive Board (NEB) to continue developing the model for Future NARFE, using the Future of NARFE Committee Report as the foundation was overwhelmingly approved with 85.89 percent of the votes cast. National President Richard Thissen emphasized that this will be done through strategic planning with stakeholder participation.

With a total of \$10,976,188 as of August 24, the Alzheimer's goal of \$11 million was projected to be reached before the end of September 2014, so NARFE-Alzheimer's National Committee Chair Jane Rodgers proposed establishing a new goal of \$12 million by 2016. The delegates readily agreed with their vigorous applause.

The keynote speaker for the NARFE-PAC Breakfast was Aubrey Jewett, Ph.D, associate professor of political science at the University of Central Florida. He had reviewed current polling data and made predictions for the midterm elections in November. His forecast is that Republicans will keep their majority in the House and may build on it. In the Senate, it is likely that Republicans will pick up enough seats to take control. Looking ahead to 2018, Dr. Jewett predicts a race for President between Hillary Clinton and Jeb Bush.

The Convention keynote speaker was Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Director Katherine Archuleta. Appointed in November 2013, she is new on the job but thanked NARFE for its tireless support of the federal family. She said that NARFE has persevered through some pretty tough times for federal workers and retirees while keeping the pressure on to make sure benefits were not cut and keeping members well informed every step of the way. She also gave us an update on phased retirement, the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) and her newly created Retirement Services Working

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Henderson (Continued)

Group that is concentrating on customer service, information technology and claims adjudication. OPM recently added 15 new agents to its Retirement Services call center and will add more over the next few months.

It was an honor to represent the Tennessee Federation at the Federation Presidents Meeting and the National Convention this year. I always get a renewed and reenergized feeling when I attend a National Convention. Seeing all of the loyal, dedicated NARFE National Officers and their staff, regional vice presidents, federation officers, chapter officers and members who work with such energy, enthusiasm and commitment on behalf of our federal family is a remarkably uplifting experience.

There were a few awards presented at our Federation Convention that I would like to share with you as follows:

1. Federation Alzheimer Chair Joan Gates presented the Weida White Tolley Memorial Alzheimer's Award to Dickson Chapter 727 for contributing the most per capita with \$24.52. She also recognized Clarksville Chapter 870 for contributing the largest dollar amount to Alzheimer's with a total of \$2,640.11.

2. Federation NARFE-PAC Chair Charles Thompson presented the NARFE-PAC Leo Potts Memorial Award to Cumberland County Chapter 1719 for contributing the most per capita with \$21.79.

I commend all of these chapters for their competitive determination to excel in their support of these very important NARFE programs.

I am delighted to have an opportunity to announce two new incentives approved by the Federation Executive Board during our August meeting. During the 2015 Federation Convention, a drawing will be held and any recruiter present at the convention who recruited at least one new member will be eligible for a free nights lodging at the convention hotel or equivalent. In addition, all federation members who preregister for the convention by February 1, 2015 will be eligible to win a free night's lodging at the MainStay Suites in Pigeon Forge.

When you receive this newsletter, a few weeks will be left in the Federation sponsored Member Recruiting Contest running through December 31. As of the end of August, 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 and Margaret Wooten. There will be one more status report through October in the January newsletter but the winners will not be announced until the Federation Convention in April.

Additional recruiting incentives were announced by National Headquarters in late August. Recruiters will receive \$10 for each new member, current OR retired, who joins between September 1 and December 31, 2014 (applications must be postmarked, and calls or website joins must be received, by the December 31 deadline). In addition, all September through December recruiters will be entered into a drawing, once for each new member they have recruited and a Kindle Fire tablet will be awarded to a recruiter randomly selected from this pool.

During the August meeting, the board selected Federation District Officer Herb Arnett to attend the NARFE 2015 Legislative Training Conference March 14-17, in Arlington, Va. Unfortunately, Mr. Arnett will be unable to attend and no other candidate met the eligibility criteria.

There are still vacant federation officer positions that need to be filled. If you would be willing to serve as our Nomination Committee Chair, Membership Chair or Public Relations Chairperson, I would be very interested in hearing from you. Contact me via telephone at 731-784-0675 or email at jhenderson@narfetn.org. District Officers are also needed for

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Tennessee Federation Officers (Continued)

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Membership Chairman

Vacant

Immediate Past President

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NARFE Appointed Positions

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Henderson (continued)

Congressional Districts 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9. If you reside in one of these districts and would be willing to serve in these highly influential positions, please contact Federation Legislative Chair Jim Glenn via telephone at 931-473-5074 or email at jglenn@narfetn.org. We do have one less vacant District Officer position. I am very pleased to announce the appointment of John Wells as our Federation District Officer for Congressional District 5. His talents and continued service on the board are very much appreciated.

You should also be aware of one other important federation officer change. Due to recently increasing family commitments, Federation Treasurer Marie Anglin resigned effective October 1, 2014. Marie has faithfully served the federation with exceptional efficiency, diligence and dedication for many years while setting a standard that will be difficult to match. She will be greatly missed on the Federation Executive Board. In accordance with the Federation Bylaws, Article I, Section 5, I am pleased to announce that Michelle Griffin of Nashville Chapter 227 has been appointed to fill the unexpired term. I congratulate Ms. Griffin on this appointment and very much appreciate her willingness to serve in this vital position on the board.

The Federation Constitution and Bylaws Review and Revision Committee's final draft should be on the Federation Website at www.narfetn.org by the time you receive this newsletter. If you have questions, contact Committee Chair Ronnie Collins via telephone at 615-735-2486 or email at rcollins@narfetn.org. A paper copy of the final draft will be mailed to each Chapter President prior to the next Federation Convention.

Since our convention last April, the federation has lost officers in two of our chapters. Millington Chapter Secretary Shirley Pate passed away in late April and Germantown Chapter President Lamar Spenser passed away in early June. On behalf of the federation, I express sincere condolences to both families.

I have three important reminders which are listed for your information as follows:

1. To ensure proper collection of chapter dues, as well as accurate chapter officer information, chapters should submit an F-7 Update to National Headquarters by January 1 annually. It can be found on the "Chapter Activities" page of the Online Activities Module at www.narfe.org.

2. It is not too early to begin making plans for the 2015 Federation Convention being held April 20-21 at the Riverview Inn in Clarksville. 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. A Delegate Form can be found in this issue of the newsletter.

3. The 2014 Federal Benefits Open Season is November 10 – December 8. OPM has a separate website for this year's Federal Benefits Open Season that contains information on the various benefits available to employees and retirees. It also contains information about Open Season web casts that will be available for viewing on line. The website can be found at: <http://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/open-season>.

Since the winter holiday season will have passed by the time you receive the next newsletter, I will take this opportunity to express my sincere wish that you have a Happy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year. Please remember our less able senior members during this time; a card, telephone call or visit should warm their hearts and yours too.

-Larry Henderson, Federation President
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Shackleford elected as new Region X VP

I want to thank those Region X members who attended the 33rd NARFE National Convention for electing me to the position of Regional Vice President for Region X.

There is no doubt that change is necessary in NARFE. Moving forward, it is my sincere hope that all members in Region X have been educating themselves on the issues that will affect all of us in the immediate future and the whole organization long beyond the conclusion of this Convention. I also hope that all members will keep open minds and not let minority opinions cloud everyone's thinking. We are all aware of the proposals in the Future of NARFE (FON) Committee report which makes clear the facts that NARFE is not sustainable long term in its current form.

But what should be changed, where the change should take place and when, are the key questions. At this point, I don't believe there is consensus across the NARFE organization on these important issues. Hind-sight is always 20/20 and we would have been better served if the Future of NARFE Committee had been established in July 2012 instead of July 2013 allowing us to develop 35, 40 or whatever number of recommendations and then fully educating our members in the field. Changes would have been as needed and we may have been able to vote on a more acceptable package of recommendations.

I believe that all of the members of the new NEB understand that moving NARFE forward is a difficult task and we believe that we have come up with what is an appropriate vision of how a future NARFE could be organized and operate. I will admit that our vision is not the perfect one. We have an existing organization with regions, federations, areas and chapters. We are all members of each of those and our age group generally doesn't like drastic change, particularly when it feels like it's being directed from the top down rather than from the bottom up.

There is no question that, if we save federations and chapters yet still lose NARFE as a viable organization, we've all

still lost. However, if we use the existing FON package as a foundation, starting point or whatever term you feel comfortable with and couple it with solid input from all members as well as give and take on all levels when it asks us to give up the organizational levels and other items we are most familiar with we can, and I believe will, derive the most satisfaction from the creation of a new NARFE that we can be proud of and one that will meet our needs.

Many of you may have been in the Washington DC area in the 1970s and remember the tag-line of George Allen, the Hall of Fame Washington Redskins coach - - "The Future Is Now". Enough said "The Future of NARFE Is NOW" and it is now time to meet it head-on.

I am proud of NARFE and believe that the members of Region X have the potential to make a difference in the overall growth and success of NARFE. The task will not be easy, but I believe that we must set new parameters that we can use to create a stronger NARFE that will carry the mission forward for many years to come. We owe our members and mission our best efforts. We owe so much to the loyal, dedicated members and leaders of today and of the past. We have experienced many successes led by them. We must build on all this fine work as we go forward with a streamlined structure geared to our mission, diversified funding, and an end to membership decline. We must look to the future and what NARFE can become in the 21st Century and I look forward to meeting and working with each and every member of the Tennessee Federation. Any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me by telephone or e-mail.

*William "Bill" Shackleford
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NARFE Appointed Positions (Continued)

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Vacant

Special Project Officer

Vacant

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West Tennessee joint chapter meeting a success

The Fifth Annual West Tennessee Joint Chapter Meeting was held on August 19th. Jackson Chapter 519 hosted the meeting, and there were members from seven chapters in attendance. Federation President Larry Henderson and Federation Legislative Chair James Glenn were the speakers. Larry explained resolutions and amendments that were to be voted on at the National Convention the following week. Jim gave an update on current legislative items. He also discussed how important it is for members to contact their representatives. There was a lot of sharing of ideas and everyone seemed to enjoy the meeting --- and a couple of folks even won door prizes. I'm already looking forward to our joint meeting next year!

The 2014 National Convention that was held in Orlando August 24-28 was the first national convention that I have attended. I really didn't know what to expect, but it was an interesting and enjoyable experience.

At the National Convention this year, \$8,750 was raised for Alzheimer's research from a cash raffle and donations. The national total of NARFE Alzheimer's contributions as of August 28, 2014 was \$10,979,408 and the goal of \$11 million was projected to be reached before the end of September 2014. The National Committee recommended and the delegates adopted a new goal of \$12 million by 2016.

Resolution 14-01 authorizing the Na-

tional Executive Board (NEB) to continue developing the model for Future NARFE, using the Future of NARFE Committee report as the foundation was approved with over 85% of the votes cast. This resolution is of great concern to me, in part because the wording of the resolution is so vague. There were some very good recommendations in the Future of NARFE Committee report, but there were also some that (in my opinion) were not good at all. It will be interesting to see how this develops.

In his acceptance speech, our new National President, Richard Thissen, acknowledged that change is needed and that he wants to include everyone. He stated that we need to recruit new members but also to focus on keeping current members happy. He pledged to close the gap between Headquarters and the field. I think this is something that is definitely needed, and I look forward to seeing it happen. We all need to work together for the greater good of NARFE.

Please mark your calendars and begin making plans now to attend our 2015 Federation Convention at the Riverview Inn in Clarksville on April 20-21. I think this will be a great convention, and I hope a lot of you will be there!

Rhonda Mooney
Federation 2nd Vice President
731 267 2336
rmooney@narfetn.org



Members enjoy lunch at the West Tennessee Joint Chapter Meeting



L-R: Jackson Chapter 519 President Lorenzo Tyson, Federation Legislative Chair James Glenn, and Federation President Larry Henderson



NARFE must find a path to solutions

Not much has changed in the last six months within NARFE. During the summer, I read all I could find on what the proposals by the FON committee meant and what members across the country thought and what they were saying. There seemed to be no consensus on how we should proceed. Everyone knew we had a problem (membership dropping sharply, no one willing to take leadership positions, especially the recent retirees not joining at all), but no clear path to solutions.

At the last minute, I decided to attend the National Convention in Orlando because I thought the decisions made there would be important and affect in a big way how we do things in the future. The proposal to move forward using the recommendations of the NARFE committee as a “springboard” for our future decisions passed the national convention vote by an 85 percent margin. I still believe in what I said in my June newsletter article and think it will not be good for NARFE to phase out Federations completely, but it appears the majority of our members (at least the one at the convention) believe it is the best way to go.

Our new president, Dick Thissen, stated in his acceptance speech that all issues are still on the table and maybe, just maybe, we can hang on to the concept of increased concentration on advocacy across the country and in Washington while also continuing to provide the support and input from our local chap-

ters through the federations.

In any event, both scenarios will require an increase in membership and an increased effort for all of us in contacting our representatives and senators whenever the opportunity presents itself.

Vice-President Rhonda Mooney and President Larry Henderson have provided us with the tools to recruit from the M-112 and have even given us a copy of a letter to use. There is even a \$10 incentive for each successful member brought on board.

We have everything we need to contact our congressional members. The national website is easy to use, and the legislative staff at headquarters is available to help you if any questions arise. I am also available for questions or any other way I can help. Call me at 931-473-5074 or email at Jaglenn@narfetn.org.

Please make the effort to accomplish these initiatives in your district. It's going to take all of us, working toward the goals of increased membership and congressional advocacy to reach our objective of preserving our benefits and possibly, our existence through NARFE.

*-Jim Glenn
Legislative Chair*

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Go out and recruit a new member

Do you remember as a child having a toy 8 Ball? It was about the size of a softball. When you asked a question, you turned it over, and the 8 Ball gave you the answer through a small window. Don't you wish future predictions were really that easy?

Last year NARFE President Joseph Beaudoin put together a task force to study what was needed to turn around the declining membership numbers of NARFE and put the organization on the right track. It was called the Future of NARFE Committee. Our recently elected Region X Vice President was a part of that committee.

This committee worked for several months and came up with a number of recommendations; some minor, some requiring a major shift in organizational structure. This package has been debated via the internet as well as at the recent national convention. No conclusion was drawn except that we should proceed with further study. A reduction of national officers was passed at the convention.

One of the problems was that it was presented as a package deal. Much like the ill-fated Affordable Care Act, it was a lot of change to swallow in one whole bite. Also, the committee did not have sufficient time to work out the details for implementation. Furthermore, the expected results are speculation at best.

Most members did agree that a change was needed. Also, some of the recommendations are doable. What is needed at this point is for the rank and file membership as well as the leadership to dissect these recommendations and see which ones will actually produce the results we are looking for; that is sustained or even improving membership.

One of the key ingredients to the success of any organization is a sustainable membership base. An increasing membership is even better. This cannot be accomplished solely by people at the national office. It MUST be constantly worked at the field level. This has not been the case for many years.

Everyone has encounters (some by chance, some deliberate) with active or retired federal employees. Everyone should be a part of the membership committee. If everyone works their personal contacts, with the national office acting as a support group, NARFE can turn the corner on membership. Without this effort, it makes little difference what our structure looks like. We will still shrink in membership to the point where we will have a problem serving our members adequately.

So, go out and recruit a new member TODAY!

*Larry Minniear
1st Vice President*



Tennessee Federation Financial Report

Period ending September 30, 2014

By Marie Anglin, Treasurer

Beginning Balance - checking account 1/1/2014 \$ 25,773.85

REVENUES

National Dues Rebate - 10% Fund	\$ 8,418.02
Interest in Checking	\$ 0.03
Per Capita Dues	\$ 81.00
1/2 of Convention Profit	\$ 828.38

Total Revenue \$ 9,327.43

Total To Be Accounted For

LESS EXPENSES:

Vouchers - Officer's expense	\$10,887.55
Newsletter Expenses	\$ 3,443.97
Board Meeting Lodging	
- Ramada Inn February	\$ 433.35
2015 State Convention Seed Money	\$ 500.00
FEEA Disaster Donation	\$ 50.00
Membership Recruiting	\$ 50.00
Website	\$ 45.00
Ramada Inn - Board Meeting Lodging	\$ 374.50

Total Disbursed \$15,784.37

9/30/2014 \$19,316.91

CD's US Bank	
Account Ending-5601	\$ 3,353.68
Account Ending-4540	\$ 3,525.75

Total Assets \$26,196.34

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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.

Mission First, People Always ... What the Chapter is All About

Several years ago, back in the late 1980's, it seemed like every time I turned on a radio I heard Neil Diamond singing "Hello Again." He has a mellow voice, and the lyrics told a story, so it wasn't an unpleasant experience.

Then, after I retired from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, when retirement and solitude really took hold, I began to listen more closely to the words. It's really a love song, but at the same time, it speaks to missing people, and in retirement, sometimes you begin to miss the people you spent a lifetime with. "Hello again, hello ... I just called to say hello ..."

Then it goes on, "Hello, my friend, hello, just called to let you know ... when I'm here alone and you're there at home, hello."

My friend Oscar Krosnes had retired long before me, and he was always after me to come with him to a NARFE Chapter meeting. They always had interesting speakers, so I was tempted, but I just didn't want to get mixed up in politics.

But I began to notice even though I was out of active government service, that government wasn't out of trying to "adjust" my medical benefits and my retirement money. Oscar gave me a couple of issues of the NARFE Magazine, and for the first time I saw where something was actually being done to protect what I had worked so hard to earn.

I decided to accept my friend's invitation and attended a NARFE Chapter meeting. It wasn't political at all. Whatever the political persuasion was of those attending that meeting, I never would have known, and they didn't ask what mine was.

The speaker was interesting, and the Legislative Chair shared news of NARFE activities that was comforting to hear, knowing that someone saw what was happening and was taking action to protect our hard-won benefits in Washington, D.C.

But what I liked even more was the camaraderie of the members. They knew about each other, they cared about what

was happening to one another, their grown children, their grandkids, where they wanted to vacation that year. It was a very large family,

In fact, they even had a telephone committee that called each month to stay in contact with members who could not get out to the meetings. I later learned that for some of those retirees, it was just about the only phone call they got. They took care of one another. That sold me on joining the chapter.

"Hello, my friend, hello ... just called to let you know ... I know it's late ... but I couldn't wait ... Hello."

Ed Evans
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Want more laughter in your life? Get a pet...

Most of us have experienced the joy of playing with a furry friend, and pets are a rewarding way to bring more laughter and joy into your life. But did you know that having a pet is good for your mental and physical health? Studies show that pets can protect you from depression, stress, and even heart disease.



Health Benefits of Laughter

“The nice part about living in a small town is that when you don’t know what you’re doing, someone else does.”

While the science of humor is a relatively new discipline, research studies on the health benefits of laughter consistently demonstrate the connection between laughing and longevity. Researchers know that laughing lowers blood pressure while increasing blood flow and oxygen intake, all positive physiological effects that have been linked to a decreased risk of heart attack and stroke.

Because laughing triggers the release of the drug-like neurochemical endorphin, laughing simply makes people feel better all over. Laughing also can have an anesthetic-like effect on the body, suppressing physical pain and discomfort for up to two hours following a hearty chuckle.

The ability to laugh is closely tied to hav-

ing a positive outlook on life, an important protective factor against numerous mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. A study at Northwestern University revealed that patients with advanced COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) who were exposed to humorous videos enjoyed better mental health than study participants who viewed non-humorous videos, supporting the connection between mental wellness and humor.

Laughing also promotes emotional well-being, helping people maintain a positive outlook and stable mood throughout the day. Optimism has been linked to improved resiliency; the ability to cope with stressful situations in spite of numerous obstacles such as disease, financial stress or the loss of a loved one.

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