

November 2009

Message from the SC Federation President

(From John Geiger - Federation President)

November, a short month with the Thanksgiving holiday and travel, will be even busier for our NARFE membership. Chapter elections are the norm, but for many of our Chapters this month is the last opportunity to vote on the NARFE Dues Referendum. At press time, Aiken, Greenville, Rock Hill and the At-Large vote (mine) had been submitted-or 18 Chapters yet to complete. Perhaps Chapters have voted, mailed their ballots and just haven't let Federation Secretary Esther Crandall know, but we need to track this in the event someone is under the weather or on a cruise and needs to complete the process before the December 8 closing of the "polls." This is crucial as we are seeking to improve Chapter representation, rather than have fewer Chapters weigh-in on this important issue.

At the mention of Chapter elections of new officers, your Federation Officers will be available to install these members in the weeks ahead. Those who have agreed to accept the Chapter leadership positions or continue on for another term need to be congratulated for their willingness to step forward on behalf of their fellow Chapter members and NARFE. Acceptance of this responsibility doesn't just happen. Sure, we have all heard the story of the new member who attended the first meeting to come away with an officer job, and that's luck. But the planned succession enables a Chapter to seek resources to prepare officers for more effective tours by promoting better understanding of the job.

One of the best resources, the Region III Leadership Development Seminar, was conducted this month in Columbus, Georgia. The Sumter Chapter 1786 had four members attend which is outstanding. This is the NARFE version of Effective Supervision training which enlightens all who attend, allowing them to return to their Chapters (and Federation) better prepared to accomplish their jobs, while gaining a new awareness of NARFE-make that batteries recharged. Thanks to Bob Harrell, Region III VP and the Columbus, GA Chapter 219 for conducting this excellent training and to our National President, Margaret Baptiste, for taking time from her busy schedule to speak to the 135 attendees from the Region.

Congratulations to Sharron Neely as the new President of the Myrtle Beach Chapter 1015, succeeding Pat Bistodeau who recently stepped down. Sharron was already busy making a Chapter presence at the Myrtle Beach Health Fair-an excellent opportunity for recruiting.

Please make sure you catch 1st Vice President Jeanette Keeper's article that follows in this month's Newsletter on the Spartanburg Chapter 560 "Gang of 25" and what they have done to establish and carry on the NARFE banner for all these many years. The key is that every Chapter has its Gang of 25 or 10 or 5. It's up to each of us to identify, mentor and expand this number to carry on the great work done by those who came before us.

In answer to the retention-related question "What has NARFE done for me," NARFE has done a lot with the signing by the President into law of the Defense Authorization Bill that allows Active Federal Employees that are in the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) to use their Sick Leave to add to their years of service for retirement purposes. AND Federal Retirees who return to Federal Service on a limited, part-time basis will no longer have their annuities offset. This is huge and the direct result of NARFE partnering with other organizations to keep these two initiatives on the front burner.

We still have some IOU's out there to meet with our Congressmen when they are available in the District. You will recall that some of our meetings were pre-empted by the Congressional Town Hall Meetings dealing entirely with Health Care Reform, but our members were still able to get some "face time" during the Grass-roots Advocacy in August and early September. Our intention is to follow-up on these opportunities to thank each Congressman as appropriate for their support as well as promote our



John Geiger,
SC Federation President

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core issues--Premium Conversion and elimination of the GPO/WEP. Keep up the pressure (!) and let me know of any breakthroughs that you may have in the Legislative arena.

Finally, plan now to attend the State Federation Convention at the Spartanburg Marriott at the Renaissance Park, April 21-22, 2010. A NARFE National Officer (to be determined) will be one of the speakers and the goal is a great convention. The Convention Announcement Letter is out and I again, encourage each Chapter to consider supporting the Convention through attendance as well as the Program brochure with your Chapter advertisements.

Thanks to each of you for your service, your continued support of your Chapters, the SC Federation and NARFE.

Best regards,

John Geiger
President,
South Carolina Federation of NARFE Chapters

MESSAGE FROM THE FEDERATION 1ST VICE PRESIDENT

(Jeanette Keepers, Spartanburg Chapter 560)

NARFE's National Secretary, Nat Brown, wrote an article for the October issue of the NARFE magazine, where he stressed the value of Chapter membership. He pointed out, while "National Bylaws require that all members belong to a chapter, no one is required to attend a chapter meeting." I am guilty of being a member of several organizations (Sierra Club, Audubon, Master Gardeners' Association of the Piedmont, SPACE, Critter Connection, to name a few), pay my dues regularly, but seldom attend any meetings. I know I'm missing out on the essence and the very reason I belong to these groups, but with my hectic schedule, I prioritize and make a point of going to our NARFE chapter meetings. It's here where I learn from fellow members why NARFE is important to all of us. That was made abundantly clear at our October meeting, as recounted by Charlie Neal, Historian extraordinaire:



Jeanette Morales Keepers, 1st VP

They called themselves "The Gang of Twenty-Five", and were a dedicated group of movers and shakers who joined Spartanburg Chapter 560 in the 1970s. They pledged to do their best to keep the chapter going and growing. Because disease and old age have intervened, they now number fifteen. It certainly wasn't because they quit or let their membership lapse: they remained true to their stated ideals. Nine men and six women continue to support the chapter as they are able. Of the original gang, Charlie Neal, Carmen and R.V. Sherbert regularly attend the meetings; however, Charlie reports that four are in nursing homes and eight others consider themselves too infirm to come, even when offered rides. All report they enjoy the Chapter Newsletter and the phone calls that keep them informed and abreast of their favorite NARFE chapter's happenings!

What I admire most about "The Gang of Twenty-Five" is that they took a chance to clearly articulate a vision/mission and they had a sense of urgency to live out that vision/mission. In order for NARFE to keep going and growing, we all need to look at different ways to achieve this end. Experimentation may be the key. Be creative and dare to take chances. What works for one chapter, may not work for yours, so keep an open mind, be willing to tweak the norms and strive for results.

To this end, your chapter may decide to host a booth at a health or county fair, where no matching funds are required. Myrtle Beach Chapter 1015 and Spartanburg Chapter 560 did that last month, with results to follow in a separate article. I also encourage everyone to carry recruitment brochures and dues withholding forms with you at all times. Granted, these suggestions I've offered are no-brainers, so here's my challenge to you: how about following the example of the innovative members of Chapter 560 and forming a "Gang of Twenty-Five" in your chapter? Let's all do our part to keep NARFE going and growing!

Jeanette M. Keepers, Convention Chair
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P.S. Sorry to say, the First Annual Spartanburg County Heritage Fair, October 24th was cancelled due to weather so Chapter 560 was unable to host a booth last month.

NARFE HEALTH FAIR HANDOUT FLYER

At the request of Regional Vice President Martha Leiker, NARFE Headquarters has designed an additional, optional 2009 health fair handout. This one-page flyer can be used IN ADDITION TO other NARFE information that you are planning to offer at an upcoming fair.

The flyer is available for download by clicking the link below. The NARFE chapter or federation involved in the health fair is responsible for reproducing sufficient quantities for the event. The flyers are NOT available from HQ. 2009 Health Fair Handout <http://www.narfe.org/pdf/f-132.pdf>

Distinguished Members Recognized

(Larry Shaff, Secretary, Hilton Head-Bluffton Chapter)

Three members of the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton chapter were recently awarded Distinguished Members certificates and pins. Chapter President Paul Russo presented the certificates and pins to Eleanore Klatt, Carl Newman, and William Shea stating "At a time, in our society, when dedication to a cause is diminishing, it is heartening to be able to recognize you with a Distinguished Member citation. It represents your more than 20 years of NARFE membership and acknowledges your commitment to preserving the retirement benefits of federal employees. Thank you for the confidence you have placed in NARFE." Congratulations to the distinguished members.

Larry T. Shaff
Chapter Secretary

FEDERATION MEETING - JANUARY 2010

Let's start the New Year right with a Federation Executive Board Meeting in Columbia SC on January 11th, 2010. Be sure to mark your calendar. As usual, the meeting will be at Seawell's in Columbia. Lunch will be provided. The meeting will start at 10:30 a.m. and will be adjourn around 3:00 p.m. All Federation Board Members, DFOs, Chapter Presidents, and Committee Chairs are urged to be there.

MARRIOTT HOTEL SPARTANBURG AT RENAISSANCE PARK

Centrally located in downtown Spartanburg, SC, this stunning, new Spartanburg hotel is located within walking distance of restaurants, entertainment, quaint shops, and historic Spartanburg walking tours. Beautiful rooms, terrific restaurants, hallmark Marriott service, ample parking and easy access make this Spartanburg, SC hotel ideal for our NARFE Annual Convention in 2010. Spartanburg Marriott hotel rooms are oversized with refrigerator, safes & hi-speed internet access and excellent meeting rooms. Walk to historic Spartanburg attractions & shopping, Wireless internet access in hotel public area. Visit the nearby Chapman Cultural Center, Spartanburg's newest jewel! Shows, science & history museum, art displays, craft classes and more.

- * The Spartanburg Marriott hotel at Renaissance Park
- * 299 North Church Street
- * Spartanburg, South Carolina 29306 USA
- * Phone: 1-864-596-1211
- * Fax: 1-864-596-1219
- * Toll-free: 1-800-327-6465

Be sure to tell them that this is for the NARFE Federation Convention.



ADS IN THE 2010 CONVENTION PROGRAM

(John Rungo - Program advertising chair - Chapter 560)

The 2010 NARFE Federation Convention Program is sponsored by the advertisements taken out by our sponsors and by supporting chapters and members of NARFE. Chapter 121 and Chapter 560 have both signed up for a half-page ad in the program which will be used to commemorate those chapter members who have passed on in 2009. This is a good way to honor members from your chapter. A half page ad costs \$75 for NARFE Chapters and business card ads cost \$25. Two other members of the upstate chapters have taken out ads in the program as well. The forms for submitting ads for the program can be downloaded at this web site: www.scnarfe.org
Simply click on the NARFE Convention Link at the bottom of the page.

NEWS FROM OUR CHAPTERS

- ◆ The Greenville Chapter, 121, had their ballot on the Single Dues Referendum on October 30th and the vote was almost unanimous to approve the single dues. The vote of those present at the meeting along with all absentee ballots will be certified by the Secretary and forwarded to the National Headquarters. Chapter 121 chapter has four votes assigned as a result of their membership. Be sure that your certified Chapter votes on this important issue are forwarded to National Headquarters by your secretary.

 - ◆ Sharron Neely is the new President of the Myrtle Beach Chapter 1015, succeeding Pat Bistodeau who recently stepped down
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NARFE EVENTS CALENDAR

NARFE Executive Board Meeting, 10:30 a.m., Columbia, SC - January 11, 2010.

SC Federation Annual Convention, Marriott Hotel, Spartanburg, SC April 21, 22, 23, 2010

NATIONAL NARFE Convention - Grand Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids, MI in 2010

NATIONAL NARFE Convention - Nugget Hotel, Reno, NV in 2012

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