



MERRY CHRISTMAS - HAPPY HANUKKAH - HAPPY KWANZAA  
HOLIDAY GREETINGS - HAPPY NEW YEAR  
TO ALL OUR MEMBERS FROM THE SC FEDERATION OF NARFE CHAPTERS!

**MESSAGE FROM THE FEDERATION PRESIDENT**

(From John Geiger - Federation President)

It's the Christmas Season and if you are not in the spirit by now, you have some catching up to do. As your plans include reconnecting with Family and friends, some of you will be traveling long distances to make wonderful memories. For our Chapters, this is a special time to celebrate and reflect on the past year, while looking ahead to 2010! Many of you are involved with helping the less fortunate in a tough economy, and share in making your communities better through the many things you do. Our membership is known for its volunteerism, and there couldn't be a better time to make a difference.

This is also a time of transition in the leadership of our Chapters as new officers are elected to take the reins with past officers agreeing to continue one more time. For the new officers, thanks for stepping up. Your predecessors should be able to give you a good start and you should avail yourselves of the Chapter Officer descriptions to make sure you cover your new duties. Also, we have 7 of the very best District Field Officers available in NARFE to help you, so ask for help as you need it. And your Federation President is always available, so let us help you get a good start on your 'new' Administration (or maybe a battery recharge on your 'old' Administration). Thanks to all our Chapter Officers for going that extra mile.



John Geiger,  
SC Federation President

Next Tuesday, December 8, the polls close on the Single NARFE Dues Referendum. At press time, the overall results were not available. We will let you know as soon as we learn of the referendum results.

On the all important subject of Legislation, Health Care Reform continues to dominate Senate deliberations in an effort to pass something before the Christmas Recess. Our Headquarters Legislative Staff, led by Dan Adcock, Director, will notify us of any call to action. But we need to be "on-the-line" to be aware of an immediate need to weigh-in with our Senators and Congressmen in the event that negotiations lead to an adverse situation affecting our Federal Employee Health Benefits Program. If you are not signed up for the NARFE Legislative Hotline you are not "on-the-line." Please make sure that National has your current e-mail address and share the hotline with those who don't have computer access. NARFE vigilance at the Grass-roots level is essential to heading off an adverse action that detracts from our hard won benefits in this key arena at this crucial time. Our Legislators do listen, and eventually get back to with a deliberate response, but we must maintain the pressure and let me know of your results.

Monday, January 11 in Columbia, we will conduct the first of two Federation Executive Board Meetings. This is the meeting that is attended by new (and

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extended) Chapter Presidents to give your Executive Board an opportunity to review the challenges and opportunities facing our Chapters. Bob Harrell, Region 3 Vice President will also provide his insightful view of where we stand in the national perspective. Also Don Stewart, Immediate Past President of the Florida Federation has agreed to give a short talk on Retention to attendees. Don Stewart has announced his candidacy for Bob Harrell's seat when Bob steps down.

Financially, our Federation budget is on track, but we have not closed on Leadership Development Seminar expenses. Once we receive Chapter expense requests for this valuable Seminar, we will be able to provide some assistance to those Chapters who sent attendees.

Finally, a reminder to plan on attending the State Federation Convention at the Spartanburg Marriott at the Renaissance Park, April 21-22, 2010. We do not know which NARFE National Officer will be one of the speakers, but it could be National President Margaret Baptiste. I urge each Chapter to support your Convention through attendance as well as the Program brochure with your Chapter advertisements, resulting in a great Convention in Spartanburg!

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 1<sup>ST</sup> VICE PRESIDENT**

(Jeanette Keepers, Spartanburg Chapter)

This has not been the first time I've been reminded of how important all of our chapter members are. We serve in whatever capacity we feel most comfortable and to the extent that we are physically able. This can be as officers at the chapter or Federation level, or as faithful meeting attendees, or as shut-ins who keep abreast by reading the NARFE magazine, the chapter newsletter and by staying current on NARFE dues.

Because every NARFE member is important, it is equally important that each chapter recognizes the individuals who have reached a significant milestone in their tenure: that of Distinguished Member. The Distinguished Member program has replaced the Honorary Member, as of a vote held at the 2008 National Convention, in Louisville, KY. The requirements are the same, in that the member should be 85 years old and have 20 years of continuous membership in NARFE. Think about that accomplishment. Perhaps I should have said 85 years young, because these folks keep on keeping on!

Charlie Neal, Chapter 560's Historian (and the SC Federation Historian), keeps track of all the members in his chapter who have reached or are nearing the magic numbers. He states the biggest problem he has is with those who don't want to admit to their birth year! He reports that four members in Chapter 560 became Distinguished Members in 2009. They were John Fox, 4/12, Estelle Hanson, 4/12, Henry (Hank) Burkhardt, 4/15, and Lorene Fox, 9/9. Two other members, William Pettit and Mary Allen, will be honored shortly. They all join the ranks of their esteemed colleagues, the twenty Honorary Members in Chapter 560.

I challenge each chapter to identify all members who are qualified for the Distinguished Member recognition. National Headquarters is more than willing to help you with this task. Upon verification, National will send the chapter president a handsome certificate, a wallet-sized card and a lapel pin to present to the honoree. I encourage you to take photos of the ceremony, include a short article and submit these to Bob Muller, SC Federation Newsletter Editor, [bobmuller@broadstar.net](mailto:bobmuller@broadstar.net) for inclusion in a future newsletter.

The significance of this gesture cannot be underestimated to these most deserving members who have contributed so faithfully to NARFE's on-going success.

Jeanette M. Keepers, Convention Chair  
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Jeanette Morales Keepers, 1<sup>st</sup> VP

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## **FROM THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

(Bob Muller - Federation Newsletter Editor)

I take pride in creating a useful and informative newsletter for the SC Federation of Chapters, but it is a task that cannot be done by one person alone. I've been given copies of other Federation Newsletters around the country and am amazed at the mass of information that is shared by their Chapter Officers, Committee Chairs and DFOs in other areas of the country through their Federation Newsletter. They seem to have the same opinion that I have always had, "information shared is information learned."

For example:

- In Arizona where they do a Federation Newsletter every other month, there is a half-page to a full page report from every one of the six DFO's in Arizona and in some cases they reported on the activities of every chapter in their District. What they are doing to recruit, raise money, their grass roots advocacy activities, and their social functions. In addition, there is a half-page to a full page report from the Alzheimer's Coordinator, The State Legislative Officer and the Federal Legislative Officer, along with the report from the NARFE-PAC Chair, the Treasurer and the Secretary for the Arizona Federation. They too have a message from their Federation President and 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President as we do and their editor does a great job in putting it all together. The Arizona Federation Newsletter is 12 pages long!
- The Oregon Federation Newsletter is a quarterly publication five pages long with an article each quarter by every one of the five DFOs in the state. They too report on the activities of almost all chapters in their respective districts. Probably with input from each of the Chapter Presidents during the Quarter. There is also the message from the President and Vice President, the Alzheimer's Chair and the Service Officer as well as the Secretary and Treasurer for the Federation.
- The Palomar Chapter from San Diego has a monthly newsletter that is six pages long. It contained a full report on the Alzheimer's Research Program as well as the fund raising program that was being done in the entire state of California. This was written by Laura Wilcox, a former South Carolina Alzheimer's Chair. There was also an article by Doug Wilcox which was a full page long on the monthly activities of their chapter.
- The Ohio Federation has a monthly newsletter, nine pages long with no pictures. It contains a monthly membership report, legislative report, and an Alzheimer's report from the respective chairs. In addition to the Presidents message, the Secretary and Treasurers report, there is a lengthy report from the five DFO's in the large state of Ohio including information on the activities of their respective chapters. There was an excellent report from the Scholarship/Disaster Assistance Chair on the 2009 NARFE Scholarship program and the winner from the Ohio as well as a full report on the Legislative Conference held in their region. .

In the two years that I've been doing the federation Newsletters there are some Federation Chairs that I have *never* heard from; there are some DFOs that I only hear from at Conventions or Executive Board Meetings when they make their reports. There are some SC Chapters and SC Federation Committee Chairs that I have *never* heard from as to what they are doing except at the convention when they report on what they've done over the year.

I've said it before and I'll say it again. Your Federation newsletter will only be as good as the effort that the Federation individuals put into it by providing news of their activities during the year. I'd like to commend people like Larry Shaff, who is now the Federation Service Officer for his efforts to keep South Carolina members informed of activities under his purview. His efforts, along with those of your President and 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President have been exemplary, and your editor sincerely appreciates their dedication and assistance in contributing to the SC Federation Newsletter.

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**NARFE 2009**  
*Scholarship*  
*Winners*

### **NARFE SCHOLARSHIP AWARD IN SOUTH CAROLINA**

(Bob Muller - Newsletter Editor)

This year, nationally, there were 730 student applicants for the 60 one time \$1000 scholarships, an increase from the 573 applicants in 2008. NARFE divides the 60 scholarships equally amongst the 10 Administrative Regions resulting in 6 scholarships for each Region. South Carolina is of course in region III. There was one winner of a scholarship in South

Carolina, Ms. Chelsea Rzepkowski, a student at The University of South Carolina. Chelsea is the daughter of Ronald Rzepkowski, member of Chapter 1013, the Charleston Chapter. Congratulations Chelsea and also NARFE Member Ron Rzepkowski.



**FROM THE FEDERATION SERVICE OFFICER**

(Larry Shaff, Federation Service Officer)

**Important Deadlines for Federal Retirees:**

**December 14, 2009**

Last day of Open Season for the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program. There are three ways to make changes:

1. Log on to Open Season at <http://retirefehb.opm.gov>. where there are detailed instructions for completing transactions.
2. Call 1-800-332-9798 between the hours of 5 AM and 1 AM and follow the prompts.
3. Write to Office of Personnel Management, Open Season Processing Center, P.O. Box 5000, Lawrence, KS 66046-0500.

For all methods you will need your CSF or CSF claim number, social security number, enrollment codes of your current plan and your new plan, and if selecting family coverage your dependents' names, social security numbers, and dates of birth.

**December 15, 2009**

If you are receiving payments from your Thrift Savings Plan and would like to make changes complete Form TSP-73 and mail the form to Thrift Savings Plan, P.O. Box 385021, Birmingham, AL 35238 in sufficient time to reach the destination by December 15th. If you do not have this form it can be printed from the TSP web site, [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov), or by calling the toll-free ThriftLine at 1-877-968-3778 for a copy to be mailed to you. Requests for payment changes are usually permitted annually, from approximately mid October to mid December, and are effective with the January payment.

**February 15, 2010 and March 15, 2010**

Changes to the Federal Long Term Insurance Program (FLTCIP) must be made by most enrollees by February 15, 2010, which is an extension from the usual deadline of December 14, 2009. However, some enrollees received letters mailed in October containing errors in the "Benefit Amount" section of their election letters that affect the automatic compound inflation option whose anniversary date for annual benefit increases is November 1, December 1, or January 1. Personalized corrected letters will be mailed this month to these affected enrollees who will be provided an extension up to March 15, 2010, to review their options and make a decision. Those enrollees with these anniversary dates who have already submitted their decisions based on the erroneous letters and want to reconsider their decision must call 1-800-582-3337. This is also the number members must call if they have questions about their FLTCIP enrollment.

Larry T. Shaff, Federation Service Officer

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**Chapter Ads for 2010 Convention Booklet**

John Rungo, Chapter 560's incoming President, will be accepting chapter ads for the 2010 Convention Booklet at the Federation meeting on January 11<sup>th</sup> in Columbia.

Chapters may purchase ad space by filling out an online form.

- Go to the SC Federation website "[www.scnarfe.org](http://www.scnarfe.org)".
- Click on the green bar near the bottom of the home page.
- Scroll down until you see NARFE AD FORM, in blue, and click on it to open the form.
- Follow the instructions to complete it - then print it.
- Hand-carry the form, along with your camera-ready ad and check, to the January 11 meeting.

John will be happy to see that it gets handled promptly.

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**DIGITAL HISTORICAL ARCHIVE IS READY**

Charles C. Neal, incoming Federation Historian, announces that the computer and storage system for archiving Federation documents is installed, tested and ready to start storing Federation documents for historical purposes.

- Any document that is in digital format can be accepted.
- It is hoped that the Federation and all chapters will decide to include the Archive as a recipient of all non-sensitive correspondence (newsletters, meeting minutes, chapter officer lists, chapter event notices, etc.) What you decide to send is entirely your choice.
- Please help us by contributing your chapter documents.
- To send a document via e-mail, enter "[keepersw@yahoo.com](mailto:keepersw@yahoo.com)" on the "To" line of your e-mail or add the address to your mass distribution list. Please include your Chapter number or SCFed in the subject line so we will know where to store your document.

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## **FEDERATION MEETING - JANUARY 2010**

Let's start the New Year right with a Federation Executive Board Meeting in Columbia SC on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 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.

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## **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.

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## **NEWS FROM OUR CHAPTERS**

(From Esther Crandall North Charleston Chapter)

### ◆ First District Joint Meeting -

On September 18, President Margaret Baptiste spoke at a joint meeting of Chapters 1013 Charleston, 72 North Charleston, and 1082 Summerville. Margaret was at home to attend several family functions, and the visit happened to coincide with Chapter 72's regular meeting date. Over 80 members of the three chapters attended the meeting. Pictured left to right are: Pres. Mimi Scharf 1013, SC Federation President John Geiger, Pres. Barbara Bryan 1082, National President Baptiste, 1st Field District Field Officer Charles Giavelli, and Pres. Frank Stevens 72. Key topics discussed were Single Dues Referendum, recruiting/retaining members, and Health Care Legislation. Federation Treasurer Buck Mizelle was also in attendance. A covered dish luncheon and social hour followed the meeting.



(From Moses Moultrie - District V DFO)

### ◆ On October 30, 2009, NARFE Gamecock Chapter 1786,

Sumter, SC celebrated its 29<sup>th</sup> anniversary of service to Sumter and surrounding communities. At the September chapter meeting, four of its members were presented the "Distinguished Member Certificate" and pin for many years of dedicated service to NARFE. In the photograph from left to right: John Geiger, SC Federation President,; Mary Hebert, past Secretary; Moses Moultrie, Chapter President and District V Field Officer; Julia Frierson, Charter Member; Thomas A. Holladay, Charter Member; (Essie Rivers, Charter Member, unable to attend.)

## **IRS Announces 2010 Standard Mileage Rates**

The Internal Revenue Service issued the 2010 optional standard mileage rates used to calculate the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business, charitable, medical or moving purposes.

Beginning on Jan. 1, 2010, the standard mileage rates for the use of a car (also vans, pickups or panel trucks) will be:

- 50 cents per mile for business miles driven
- 16.5 cents per mile driven for medical or moving purposes
- 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations

The new rates for business, medical and moving purposes are slightly lower than last year's. The mileage rates for 2010 reflect generally lower transportation costs compared to a year ago.

The standard mileage rate for business is based on an annual study of the fixed and variable costs of operating an automobile. The rate for medical and moving purposes is based on the variable costs as determined by the same study.

## **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

## **NARFE South Carolina Federation of Chapters**

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**NEWSLETTER DEADLINES: Last day of the month preceding publication.**