

*Serving Current and Retired
Federal Employees*

*January-February 2014
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Federation President ...

Kathryn Hensley

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“The Past is Prologue”. If I may borrow on that for a moment, we had an excellent 49th federation convention in Greenville in 2013 and we will have another excellent convention in North Charleston in May of 2014.

At the 2013 convention, the Mayor of Greenville welcomed us and a County Council member brought a resolution of welcome from the Greenville County Council. We heard from all our exhibitors and supporters about their services for NARFE. Nellie Bodenhamer conducted our Memorial Service and we were fortunate to have Carri Lybarker, Director of SC Consumer Affairs, address scams against seniors and the Department of Revenue hacking. The annual banquet speaker, LtGov Glenn McConnell was terrific. He covered many concerns of interest to our state’s senior citizens and some of the programs his office handles. Our registration was lower than usual due to factors beyond our control, but there was a surplus of funds, thanks to our exhibitors and volunteers which was shared 50/50 between the Greenville chapter and the Federation. Pictures taken at the convention will find their way soon to our newly revised web site. Read Paul Donahue’s article on Page 2 about the new web site.

On January 30 we will meet for the Federation Executive Board meeting. Chapter Presidents and Membership Chairs are invited to that meeting and we hope each NARFE member in South Carolina will attend their upcoming chapter meetings to hear about what is happening in the Federation and how each member can be more involved in NARFE activities. NARFE is only as strong as our weakest link and we need each member participating even if it is only meeting attendance. If you have given your email address to National Headquarters, you receive a weekly GEMS communication from the NARFE Headquarters. You can go to the Members Only Section of the NARFE web site (www.narfe.org) and send your message to our Congressional representatives in Washington about our concerns. PLEASE DO THIS if you do nothing else. We are making some progress, but we need more of NARFE’s members interacting with members of Congress. It is our benefits as active or retired federal employees that they effect.

To new members and eChapter members, if you are not in a local chapter or don’t know who to contact about a meeting near you, your District Field Officers are located on page 4 and throughout this newsletter are several phone numbers of federation officers who can help you. LET US HEAR FROM YOU.

Federation Vice President ...

Morgan Hill

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We’re excited the National Active And Retired Federal Employee Association (NARFE) will be celebrating our 50th year in South Carolina this year, May 12-14, and three of our chapters are combining to host this great event: Charleston, North Charleston, and Summerville. I have the honor and privilege to chair our convention, and my co-chair is Pat Whitley, president of the Summerville chapter. We have selected the Embassy Suites in North Charleston to host our event and this is a very fine facility. Room rates are \$119.00 per night (single or double), plus \$17.16 nightly for taxes and local fees. A full course breakfast is included with this rate. May is a good time to visit the Charleston area and we have arranged with the hotel for guests attending the convention to get this special rate a couple of days prior to and after the convention. A late afternoon Manager’s Reception for guests of the hotel with complimentary hors d’oeuvres and drinks is included. There is plenty of free parking and many places to shop or eat while attending the convention. The Tanger Outlet Shops are just across the street. We also will have our current National president or vice-president to address our delegates. Additional speakers will be announced as they are confirmed. I urge all SC NARFE members to attend this convention. We are planning for 100-125 participants but it would be a very special tribute to SC NARFE if we could exceed this number. The registration fee is \$65.00 per person, and this includes two evening functions – one a banquet and the other coffee and dessert. More information will be available through your chapters and on the web site, www.scnarfe.org. The convention registration is included in the newsletter.

If there are questions about the convention, please let me know.

Legislative Note

Debt Ceiling: When Congress agreed to re-open the government in Oct 2013, they included suspending the debt ceiling until Feb 7, 2014. The Treasury Department still maintains the ability to use extraordinary measures to extend the date, if Congress does not pass an increase prior to Feb 7. In Dec, Treasury Secretary Jack Lew informed Congress that using extraordinary measures extends the deadline to late Feb/early Mar 2014. Look for debt ceiling fight in mid-Feb.

Federation Service Officer ...

Sally DePreker

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Before the age of computers, the service officer played a key role in the lives of retirees and their families. Thank goodness for computers and that each of us can go online and find out just about anything we need to know about our benefits. Two important websites for benefit information are www.narfe.org and www.opm.gov. Sometimes, however, what we read online is confusing and we need to consult someone that has more knowledge and experience before we can fully understand what we've read. That's why it's important for your chapter to have a service officer, and that's why it's recommended that service officers have background and experience in benefits. If you are a chapter service officer, make sure you have the most recent copies of the FH-10, *Service Officer Guide*; F-100, *Be Prepared for Life's Events*; NARFE's *Q & A Book*; and the F-58, *NARFE Chapter Service Officer, Role, Duties, and Responsibilities*.

These can be ordered or downloaded from the NARFE website. The F-58 summarizes some important "Dos" and "Don'ts" we need to keep in mind when we are trying to assist someone:

- DO** try to follow up on any promised information.
- DO** be patient with members having difficulty explaining what they need.
- DO** keep resources handy for reference.
- DO** admit when you don't know something.
- DO NOT** guess the answer to a question you don't know.
- DO NOT** give tax or financial advice.

Federation Legislative Chair ...

John Geiger

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As the 113th Congress begins its second year, the Federal Family can look forward to the continuing onslaught by the House Republican Tea Party members, countered by the Democrat controlled Senate which may or may not be of help. An update on major areas of NARFE concern are contained in this newsletter. The most recent effort before the Christmas recess saw the successful agreement resulting in the Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA) of 2013, which sought to reduce the impact of sequester at the expense of our newest members of the Federal workforce by increasing retirement contributions (to 4.4%) without an increase in benefit. To offset sequester cuts, both House and Senate bills reduced the Cost of Living Adjustment for working age military retirees by 1% that included those retired with disabilities. Now that the BBA is law, there is a bipartisan effort to fix this in the Omnibus Budget bill. Note that NARFE activists were able to convince Congress that the Chained Consumer Price Index was not a solution, hence it was not part of the Budget Act--a relief to Federal retirees and Social Security annuitants. For Active Federal Employees, the reduction of sequester cuts means there should be no furloughs during the next two years. Finally, the addition of "self plus one" option to the FEHBP is a welcome effort to reduce health premiums.

The outlook for completion of the \$1.1 trillion omnibus spending bill was uncertain but there was a promising development when the Continuing Resolution was extended for 3 days in mid-Jan. Both House and Senate budget negotiators felt they were close to agreement on the package of 12 appropriations bills which would run the Government through September 30th. As it turned out, the omnibus spending bill sailed through the Senate by a vote of 76-22 on behalf of H.R. 3547. Senator Graham voted in favor and Senator Scott voted against it.

Federation Web Coordinator ...

Paul Donahue

<http://www.scnarfe.org>



This year as we approach my tenth year with NARFE's South Carolina Federation, along with its 21 chapters having their own internet websites, it became a matter of how do we respond to the growing frenzy of **Social Media** interests and new technology? NARFE Headquarters continually boasts of its growing E-Chapter's, now exceeding some 30,000 members; so the handwriting is on the wall! It appears that newer members aren't interested in "static websites" but may be more interested with accessing interactive sites such as **Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest** and others. SCFED President, Kathy Hensley, formed a group to investigate our options. Blogging sites, per se, require that someone essentially "attend" the site 24/7 in order to respond to inquiries. Finding such a person, with adequate knowledge of NARFE concerns would prove difficult, at best. Additionally, we learned that South Carolina's Federation has close to 300 E-Chapter members.

It was decided to find a suitable website development program at minimal cost to our organization. After much discussion and research, it was determined that the Host Server, which has been the mainstay of the SCFED website over all of these years, offered a "free" webpage development program, which we took advantage of and by trial and error, we published our revised <http://www.scnarfe.org> just prior to Christmas 2013. Traversing this new site, you will notice we have addressed social media matters and in addition, we have developed an E-Chapter Division webpage located on the NARFE Headquarters website. Individual SC chapter websites are being updated as time permits.

Legislative Notes

Postal Reform: No progress on S. 1486, the Postal Reform Act of 2013, which is stalled in Committee, but expected to be marked-up in January. NARFE strongly opposes the bill because of the adverse impact on **all** FEHBP participants, as well as employees receiving workers' compensation.

2014 Federal Employee Pay Increase: President Obama signed an Executive Order on December 23 guaranteeing a 1 percent pay increase for all active federal employees, ending a full 3 years of frozen pay. This lack of a pay increase amounts to \$98 billion provided by Active Federal Employees to reduce the budget deficit.



REGISTRATION FORM
50TH SC FEDERATION NARFE CONVENTION
MAY 12-14, 2014

Make hotel room reservations for SC NARFE Convention direct with:

Embassy Suites Hotel Airport - 5055 International Boulevard - North Charleston, SC 29418
Reservations By Phone: Toll Free - 1-800-EMBASSY (362-2779) or Reservations On-line at:
http://embassysuites.hilton.com/en/es/groups/personalized/C/CHSEMES-NAR-20140512/index.jhtml

Be sure to tell them you are registering for the SC NARFE Convention. Additional days before or after may be reserved at the convention rate. Late reservations are subject to availability and prevailing rate. Rates are \$119.00 single or double; \$129.00 triple; and \$139.00 quad plus tax (13.5%) and \$1.09 each night.

Note: Use a separate Convention Registration form for each registrant. PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE.

First Name: Last Name:

Badge Name if different from First Name:

Mailing Address:

City: State: Zip:

Home Phone: () Cell: ()

Email:

NARFE Chapter No. Chapter Name

Federation Officer/Past President Position

(ONLY CHECK ONE)

Federation Delegate Chapter Delegate Alternate Member Guest

MEALS: Daily breakfast for registered guests included in room rate; Daily Manager's Reception in Lobby with complimentary hors d'oeuvres and drinks. Monday evening - Coffee and Dessert Tuesday lunch on your own - many restaurants a few blocks away. Tuesday evening banquet Garden Salad, Choice of Chef's Baked Chicken Breast or Grilled Fish with vegetables and dessert.

Convention Registration fee: \$65.00 per person (Includes President's Coffee and Dessert Monday evening and Banquet Dinner Tuesday evening) Please submit payment in full by April 12, 2014. Late registration fee postmarked after April 12th is \$75.00.

Registration cancellations between April 12 and May 2, 2014 will be charged a \$15 handling fee and any cancellation between May 3 and May 12 will be charged a \$35 fee unless cancellation is due to hospitalization or other serious problem depending on what meal function guarantees have been made. Payment shall be made by check payable to SC FED Convention and mailed with this registration form to:

Gail Peapples, 114 Spring Meadows Drive, Summerville, SC 29485

For Treasurer Use:

Item No Check No Amount \$ Registrations Deposit Date

Columbia, SC CHAPTER #87
 South Carolina Federation
 National Active & Retired Federal Employees Association
 1825 St. Julian Place, 14D
 Columbia, SC 29204-2422

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NARFE

WWW.SC NARFE.ORG

TIME SENSITIVE

Mark your calendar — SCNARFE Convention May 12-14, 2014

SOUTH CAROLINA NARFE FEDERATION – EXECUTIVE BOARD

Position	Name	Chapter	Email	Phone
PRESIDENT	KATHRYN HENSLEY	COLUMBIA	kathrynhensley@hotmail.com	803-957-7750
VICE PRESIDENT	MORGAN HILL	NEWBERRY	hillmorjoy@cs.com	803-364-3806/8138
SECRETARY	PATRICIA CURRIE	GREENVILLE	patcur@yahoo.com	
TREASURER	JOE MCCARTLY	GREENVILLE	joemccarty@charter.net	
PAST PRESIDENT	BILL NICOL	HILTON HEAD	pennst63@aol.com	

DISTRICT FIELD OFFICERS With Chapters in Their Districts

DISTRICT # 1 -- BARBARA BRYAN , barbbryan43@gmail.com N. Charleston 72, Charleston 1013, Summerville 1082	DISTRICT # 2 -- ERNEST WILLIAMS , ejohnwjr@earthlink.net Columbia 87, Aiken 934, Orangeburg 1170
DISTRICT # 3 -- ROBBIE-ANN WHITE , robbieannwhite@yahoo.com Anderson 825, Greenwood 920, Clemson 1170	DISTRICT # 4 -- ROLLINS , cmreer@hotmail.com Greenville 121, Spartanburg 560
DISTRICT # 5 -- JUDITHANNE HARE , tlhare@truvista.net Newberry 772, Rock Hill 1180, Sumter 1786, Camden 2919	DISTRICT # 6 -- LINDA KOSSOW , ljkkossow@aol.com Florence 960, Myrtle Beach 1015, Pawley's Island 1958
DISTRICT # 7 -- BILL NICOL , pennst63@aol.com Beaufort 1021, Walterboro 1185, Hilton Head 2258	

Legislative Note

Health Care: Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA), Chairman of the House Oversight and Government Operations Committee, remains interested in introducing a larger FEHBP reform bill, but details have not been released publicly.