

JUNE 2011 *South Carolina Federation of Chapters*

Bill Nicol - Federation President

Volume 50 - Issue 6



JUNE MESSAGE FROM THE FEDERATION PRESIDENT

(Bill Nicol-Federation President)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Bill Nicol Federation President

The February 2011 issue of NARFE contains a list of the Civilian Annuitants, Employees, and Postal Employees by state. South Carolina as of October 2010 has a total of 71,177 for all three groupings. Our current NARFE membership is around 3500—approximately 5% of the potential members. We can do better than that. NARFE National Headquarters is doing all it can to recruit new members. Our chapters are the ones that must step up their recruiting activities. If you have any questions on what things your chapter might do, contact Sally DePreker, our First VP and Membership Chair and she will assist you. Our strength in lobbying is a function of the number of members we have. The more we have, the stronger we will be.

Region III will host a Leadership Development Seminar at Albany GA on October 3-5, 2011. The SC Federation will provide financial support to those chapter members who have or want to become more active in their chapter operations and would consider advancing to positions in the Federation. More specifics will be provided directly to the Chapter Presidents.

Support the "Protect America's Heartbeat" campaign!!

Bill Nicol

Note: Vice President Sally De Preker is on Hiatus this month her column will resume next month.

The news this past month has not been good in the legislative arena as the Congress continues to vie for “who can cut the most” related to spending, the deficit and while working to raise the debt ceiling. The common thread is using Federal Employees as a scapegoat. The June issue of NARFE Magazine is a keeper this month with its discussions of potential cuts in Federal pay and benefits. I would think that a deserving Active Federal Employee, who is not yet a NARFE member, should have your copy to understand the threat and know that NARFE is right there working on their behalf. In the meantime, the “Protect America’s Heartbeat” initiative continued with **NARFE National Call Congress Day of Action** on May 24, that included a call to the White House—4 calls to voice opposition to shifting the costs of the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program and increasing the amount that Federal Employees contribute to their retirement fund.

Last Monday, May 23, the Federation Executive Board met under the guide of our new Federation President, Bill Nicol. During the meeting, we discussed the roles of the Federation and Chapters in the lobbying process. At the Grassroots level, the SC Federation focuses on Senators with assistance from Chapters at the regional Senators’ offices. Our Chapters focus at the Congressional District in which they are located, with assistance from adjacent Chapters, in another Congressional District. With this clearly in mind, we proposed the following:

Appoint a single Point of Contact for each of the 6 Congressional Districts. This single point of contact from a Lead Chapter located within the Congressional District would be an experienced and willing volunteer to take on this additional duty.

This is a concept that Bob Harrell, Immediate Past Region 3 Vice President, used with success in the Georgia Federation. This should assist in improving our ability to lobby Congress, while coordinating among Chapters within the Congressional Districts. Some of our Chapter Legislative Officers/Chairs will, no doubt, take on this additional task, but we need to pursue this initiative to make our lobbying more effective.

At the State Hickory Knob Convention and the Federation Executive Board meeting, I included an updated version with some additional comments of Future Points of Interest in the coming months:

House Republican Budget Plan (or the Ryan Plan) for FY2012- Currently being addressed in the Senate. Note that the bipartisan Gang of 6 Senators has taken a backseat as Senator Coburn left the group. At press time, Vice President Biden has taken the lead in Senate discussions on potential cuts.

Shortfalls related to the FY2011 Continuing Resolution: Look for Agencies to have a difficult during the last fiscal quarter as the \$38.5 billion in cuts are felt. Keep in mind that our 4 new members of the SC Delegation voted against this as they felt the cuts weren’t enough, even though only half the fiscal year remained.

Raising the Debt Ceiling above \$14.3 trillion: Note the workaround of tapping the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund (CSRDF) to pay for the day-to-day expenditures beginning Monday, May 16 until the Government runs out of funds, projected to be August 2. According to the Washington Post article of May 15, 2011, this “measure won’t have an impact on retirees because the Treasury is legally required to reimburse the program.” Default on the Debt is a non-starter, with serious consequences predicted by the private sector as well as Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner. See Secretary Geithner’s letter to Speaker of the House John Boehner at: <http://www.treasury.gov/connect/blog/Documents/FINAL%20Debt%20Limit%20Letter%2005-02-2011%20Boehner.pdf>). Some of this rhetoric is downplayed by partisan Congressional members, but when military pay is at risk, one has to listen.

Actual legislation to implement Fiscal Commission recommendations: The Fiscal Commission final report is currently serving as a blueprint for the Ryan Plan. The Bipartisan Policy Center Task Force also has recommendations that provide recommendations for Federal Employee pay and benefit cuts.

Legislative Alerts as received (Latest Example: Tuesday, May 24, 2011

NARFE’s National Call Congress Day of Action (and the White House) as previously mentioned.

Medicare cuts fix by Jan 1, 2012: Ask your Doctor is you don’t believe this is an issue. Doctor willingness to take on new Medicare patients is at stake here.

Once again, you need to closely follow these activities that affect the Federal Workforce, during this unprecedented onslaught unfairly targeting Active Federal Employees, Retirees and Survivor Annuitants.

On the COLA front, the Bureau of Labor Statistics announced the April CPI-W of a 0.8 percent increase over March. The April value is up 2.9 % from the 2008 COLA Base (2008 used because of the negative inflation from the 3rd Quarter of 2008 to the 3rd Quarter of 2009). Of course, this is attributable to gas and food rising sharply, but we could get a modest COLA increase—again, unless Congress or the Administration decides otherwise.

At the State Level, Redistricting of Congressional Districts was released by the House of Representatives for the next decade. The new 7th Congressional District is proposed to include Myrtle Beach and all of Horry County with Florence County and other areas of the Pee Dee section of the state. For the past decade, Aiken County has been split with a portion of the county in each of the Second (Cong. Joe Wilson) and Third (Cong. Jeff Duncan) Congressional Districts. Under the proposed House plan, all of Aiken County would be in the Second Congressional District with all of Lexington and Barnwell counties and portions of Richland, Calhoun, Orangeburg, and Fairfield counties. As proposed, the Second District would no longer extend from Lake Murray to Hilton Head. Public testimony as to the congressional districts was invited for input on Tuesday, May 22, in Columbia.

The State Senate continued to work the budget. By law, the Legislature has to adjourn by June 2. The outlook is that the compromise spending plan with the House will extend into a June 14 extended session which has to be approved by the Legislature.

You can monitor roll call votes in the S. C. House and Senate, by going to the link at: www.scstatehouse.gov. This is useful tool when you are trying to figure out what is going on at the State House, particularly in the budget votes.

Please respond promptly to NARFE Legislative Alerts. Those that take time to call, write letters and emails are voters. Also, hold your Congressmen and Senators accountable for their votes as well as their letters responding to your concerns. Take advantage of additional time in the Congressional Districts and work to educate your Senators and Representatives on NARFE concerns. We are working together to make our voice heard, and this is NOT a spectator sport. Please let me know of your progress with your Congressmen and Senators, and drop Headquarters a note the NARFE Legislative Action Center Advocacy Activity Form (<http://www.capwiz.com/narfe/lrm/feedback.tt>). [Note that this form even covers your State Legislator and State Senator.] Thank you for your service and your continued support of NARFE as we work to protect our benefits in challenging times.

Best regards.

John Geiger, SC Federation Legislative Officer

jigeiger@aol.com

FEDERATION EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MAY 23, 2011

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA



From l-r, Jeannette Keepers, Past Federation President, Kathy Hensley, 2nd Vice President Larry Shaff, Federation Service Officer, John Geiger, SC Federation Legislative Officer , Margaret Baptiste, Past National NARFE President



From l - r, Esther Crandall, Federation Secretary ,Bill Nicol, Federation President, Robbie-Ann White, Parliamentarian, Virginia Pratt, DFO District 5

Civilian Personnel Records Services

Within 120 days of the retirement of federal employees their official personnel folders (OPFs) are transferred from their employing agency to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). Stored records date from the mid-nineteenth century to the present.

The records are protected for the individual privacy of living subjects of the OPFs by the Privacy Act of 1974. Consequently, access to all stored records is regulated by the authority of the creating agency.

If the subject of the file is LIVING, the NPRC will provide copies of documents or information only to the subject of the file or someone with written authorization from the subject of the file.

If you are not the subject of the file and do not have authorization from the subject of the file, only certain data may be obtained such as position titles and occupational series, grades, annual salary rates, duty stations, and position descriptions for the present and the past.

If the subject of the file is DECEASED, copies of some documents and some information about the deceased may be releasable to someone who submits a request.

If you are looking for your own records, and less than 120 days have elapsed since your separation from federal employment, write to the last federal office that employed you for your records.

To request information from an OPF, follow the steps below.

Step 1 - Provide written authorization.

If you are the subject of the file, send a signed letter indicating that you are requesting information from your own file.

If you are not the subject of the file and the subject is living, send a letter signed by the subject indicating that he/she authorizes the NPRC to release information to you.

If the subject of the file is deceased send proof of the subject's death. Proof of death is not required if the subject of record was born more than 100 years ago.

Step 2 - Provide information needed so that the NPRC can identify the file. Lack of the following information may result in their inability to identify a record and you may receive NA Form 13022, Returned Request _____ Form.

Full name used during federal employment

Date of birth

Social Security number, if applicable

Name of employing federal agency

Beginning date of federal service

Ending date of federal service

Step 3 - Identify the documents or information needed and explain the purpose of your request.

Step 4 - Mail to:

National Personnel Records Center
Civilian Personnel Records
111 Winnebago Street
St. Louis, MO 63118-4126

The NPRC may be contacted telephonically at 1-866-272-6272.

Larry T. Shaff, Federation Service Officer

To all NARFE members

There have been some inquiries regarding security of internet credit card processing. To ensure the privacy of all of our members we use the latest technology available for web security services.

Currently our web server is using 256-bit Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) protocol, which is the most secured encryption available to protect private communications over the Internet. Our credit card processing is using the same security protection to ensure that all credit card processing are safe.

What is an SSL Certificate?

An SSL certificate is a bit of code on a web server that provides security for online communications. When a web browser contacts a secured web site, the SSL certificate enables an encrypted connection. It's kind of like sealing a letter in an envelope before sending it through the mail.

SSL certificates also inspire trust because each SSL certificate contains identification information. When there is a request for a SSL certificate, a third party verifies the organization's information and issues a unique certificate with that information. This is known as the authentication process.

Best regards

Department of Information Technology
IT@narfe.org

South Carolina Pilot Project Concludes

By Seth Edlavitch, MyPHRSC Project Director

Since its launch in April, 2008, the Medicare sponsored My Personal Health Record, South Carolina (MyPHRSC) pilot project has offered South Carolina residents in traditional Medicare with free access to an electronic personal health record (PHR). Medicare beneficiaries that elected to participate in the pilot project received 24 months of Medicare claims data pre-populated into their PHR. This innovative tool provided registered beneficiaries with one convenient location to track their Medicare hospitalizations, diagnosed conditions, visits, medications, allergies, non-Medicare health care services, and their own notes. Medicare beneficiaries were able to access their information via the internet 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

As of March, 2011, there were over 5,000 beneficiaries and their Authorized Representatives who signed up for the PHR pilot project. MyPHRSC staff participated in more than 200 events and reached beneficiaries in every county. MyPHRSC will formally conclude in September, 2011. "I think MyPHRSC has done a wonderful job in helping our seniors manage their care. I am sorry to see the project end," said Judy Greenwood, Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging.

Medicare beneficiaries may still access their updated claims data by going to www.MyMedicare.gov.

For additional questions about MyPHRSC, send an email to questions@myphrsc.com, or call (888) 697-4772. If you have any questions about Medicare, please call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

NARFE-FEEA FUND

During this Spring we have all seen pictures of the terrible destruction wrought by tornadoes all through the mid-west. We have seen all the homes battered in Alabama, Oklahoma and Missouri and we know we are facing our own hurricane season. Please consider sending a personal donation to the NARFE-FEEA Fund. Please encourage each Chapter to take up a collection to help our members who are suffering through these tornado, hurricane, and forest fire disasters.

Do you know that since NARFE and FEEA started partnering in 1995 over \$1,000,000 has been given out in Scholarship and Emergency aid. Please send a contribution to NARFE-FEEA and mail it to me, Margaret Baptiste, 1593 Cambridge Lakes Drive, Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464 in order that I can keep a record of the contributions from our members. Then I will promptly mail on your contribution to FEEA. Please remember that your contribution is tax deductible. Your help is appreciated by all those living in areas that have been designated Federal Disaster Areas.

Submitted by, Margaret Baptiste SC Federation FEEA Coordinator

HELPFUL RESOURCE LINKS

OPM Retirement Info Center (Late News)

<http://www.opm.gov/Blogs/Retire/index.aspx>

Pre-Retirement Planning:

<http://www.opm.gov/retire/pre/planning/index.asp>

CSRS Retirement Eligibility

<http://www.opm.gov/retire/pre/csrs/eligibility.asp>

FERS Retirement Eligibility

<http://www.opm.gov/retire/pre/fers/eligibility.asp>

Five Years Before Retirement

<http://www.opm.gov/retire/pre/planning/fiveyears.asp>

One Year Before Retirement

<http://www.opm.gov/retire/pre/planning/oneyear.asp>

Less Than One Year Before Retirement

<http://www.opm.gov/retire/pre/planning/lessthanone.asp>

Applying For Retirement

<http://www.opm.gov/retire/pre/planning/apply.asp>

DEATH BENEFITS:

Reporting A Death:

<http://www.opm.gov/retire/annuity/death/index/asp>

Death Benefits:

<http://www.opm.gov/retire/faq/post/faq4.asp>

Social Security Death Index:

<http://ssdi.rootsweb.com/>

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YOUR FEDERATION OFFICERS FOR 2011-2012

Your 2011-12 Federation Officers are as follows:

President.....Bill Nicol, Hilton Head, Chapter 2258
1st Vice President.....Sally Depreker, Florence, Chapter 960
2nd Vice President.....Kathy Hensley, Columbia, Chapter 87
Secretary.....Esther Crandall, North Charleston, Chapter 72
Treasurer.....Joe McCarty, Greenville, Chapter 121
Historian.....Paul Donahue, Columbia, Chapter 87
Chaplain.....Nellie Bodenhamer, Columbia, Chapter 87
Sergeant-at-Arms..... Charles Giavelli, Summerville, Chapter 1082
Immediate Past-PresidentJeanette Keepers, Spartanburg, Chapter 560

DISTRICT FIELD OFFICERS With Chapters in Their Districts shown:

District # 1...Margaret Baptiste, Charleston Chapter 1013: N. Charleston 72, Charleston 1013, Summerville 1082
District # 2...Ernest Williams, Columbia, Chapter 87: Columbia 87, Aiken 934, Orangeburg 1170
District # 3...Robbie-Ann White, Clemson Chapter 1079: Anderson 825, Greenwood 920, Clemson 1170
District # 4...Jeannette Keepers, Spartanburg, Chapter 560: Greenville 121, Spartanburg 560
District # 5...Virginia Pratt, Rock Hill, Chapter 1180: Newberry 772, Rock Hill 1180, Sumter 1786, Camden 2319
District # 6...TBA: Florence 960, Myrtle Beach 1015, Pawley's Island 1958
District # 7...Mamie Clarke, Beaufort , Chapter 1021: Beaufort 1021, Walterboro 1185, Hilton Head 2258

Notice from OPM Regarding Direct Deposit

The U.S. Department of Treasury has made changes affecting the way you will receive your retirement benefits payments. **Everyone will be required to change to direct deposit or receive a debit card** (if you do not have a bank account) If you already have direct deposit, congratulations and thank you! If you don't please sign up now. The U. S. Treasury will be sending an official notice soon. To help you to sign up for direct deposit there are many options. You can make your change on your online retirement account at:

<https://www.servicessonline.opm.gov>

You can fax an SF 1199A form to 724-794-6633. This form can be obtained from your financial institution (bank).
You can mail an SF 1199A for to OPM Retirement Operations, PO Box 440, Boyer, PA 16017-0440.
You can visit www.GoDirect.org or call GoDirect at 1-800-333-1795

SOUTH CAROLINA FEDERATION OF CHAPTERS

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NEWSLETTER DEADLINES: Last day of the month preceding publication.

“Information Shared is Information Learned!”

Note: An updated version of the Adobe Reader is available free online, go to Adobe and download Adobe Reader at

<http://get.adobe.com/reader/>

Check out the SC Federation Website for additional Information

www.scnarfe.org

Any of the Green Underlined items in this newsletter are hyperlinks! By clicking your mouse on them, you'll be taken to the appropriate web page, form or e-mail service.

NOTE: You can download the 47th Convention Minutes and the Revised Compendium on the SC Federation Website. Go to the Federation Website, click on Related Links and near the bottom you will see a BOX for the 47th Convention Minutes and one for the Convention Attachment. Simply click on them and the documents will pop up. You can also use these hyperlinks: Minutes of the 47th Convention can be found at this hyperlink:

<http://scnarfe.org/MINUTES%20OF%20THE%2047TH%20ANNUAL%20STATE%20CONVENTION.pdf>

The Attachment, the Revised Compendium, can be found at this hyperlink:

<http://scnarfe.org/ATTACHMENT%20TO%20MINUTES.pdf>

NARFE FUTURE EVENTS CALENDAR

NARFE SC Federation Convention - TBA, Myrtle Beach, SC., TBA-2012

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

NATIONAL NARFE Convention - Rosen Centre Hotel, Orlando FL, August 24-28, 2014