



***The only organization  
solely dedicated to  
protecting and  
preserving  
the pay and benefits of  
ALL federal workers  
and retirees***

## NEWSLETTER

**Karen Anne McCann, President**

**March 2026**

### **HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY** *Officers installed for rest of year* *By Karen Anne McCann, President*

It's March! Here we go again...the months, weeks, and days zipping by too fast. I want to clarify why I was president and then I wasn't and then Howard Fitzpatrick was and then wasn't. And Robin Leong apparently stepped up to the plate and then stepped down. **Confused?** Don't be.

#### **New lineup of our 5 officers**

I am president again. Robin Leong is 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President in charge of programs (and is our Membership Chair). James Porter, who led the January meeting while Robin was out of town and I was in the hospital, is 2nd Vice President in charge of Alzheimer's. My daughter, Laura Jean Pearson, is our Secretary. Melanie McCrossin continues as Treasurer. All ducks are now in a row. We venture forward in this new year hoping to gain new members and have lots of members coming to our monthly meetings. You should come and discover some things you didn't know. You missed an excellent report about the new changes in tax laws for 2026 by Larry Fade. It was lengthy, very informative and was easy to follow with a multipage handout. The meeting is always on the second Tuesday of the month except July when NARFE is dark. For two other months, April and October, we venture to Round Table Pizza or another restaurant for a Spring luncheon and the installation of officers in October.

#### **Our magazine and our political action committee**

I was browsing in the March issue of the NARFE Magazine. The NARFE Magazine is being sent out to members digitally and by mail. Interested? If so, log into [NARFE](#), go to My Account and MY PROFILE and select "yes" for digitally only delivery.

**Are you a signed up to be a sustainer of NARFE-PAC?** You can join to help support candidates and lawmakers who understand the value of a professional, nonpartisan civil service and who are willing to stand up for active federal employees and retired federal employees. Remember: NARFE-PAC is our frontline defense.

**Happy Birthday: March 1 - Monte Simmons, March 2 - Kenneth Reed,  
March 8 - Bob Boucher, March 19 - Jim Gray, March 25 -Marie O'Donnell, and  
March 28 - Vallerie Kilkenney.**

## LEGISLATIVE REPORT

The partial Government Shutdown continues as Congress decides what to do about Homeland Security.

### Key Affected Agencies & Impacts (as of February 2026):

#### Department of Homeland Security

**(DHS):** Impacted agencies include U.S. Customs and Border Protection, ICE, and the Secret Service. Roughly 95% of TSA employees are deemed essential but will work without pay.

#### Department of the Treasury

The IRS will close taxpayer assistance centers and stop responding to paper correspondence.

**Small Business Administration (SBA):** Will pause processing new business loans, though disaster loans may continue.

**Department of Interior:** National parks and refugees may close or have reduced services.

**Department of Education:** Expected to furlough 95% of staff, excluding Federal Student Aid, during the first week.

**Department of Justice (DOJ):** Impacted, though law enforcement deemed essential will continue working without pay.

There is a letter on the NARFE Advocacy page which you can send to your congressmen urging that they find common ground to fund the critical activities of government covered by Homeland Security funding. The letter can be found on: <https://www.narfe.org/advocacyt/legislative-action-center/>

**NARFE-PAC** is your frontline defense. Efforts to weaken civil service protections, reduce earned retirement and health benefits, and politicize the federal workforce continue in Congress and across the country. Through strategic political engagement, we support candidates and lawmakers who understand the value of professional, nonpartisan Civil service and who are willing to stand up for federal employees and retirees. Every contribution helps ensure that your voice is heard clearly and consistently on Capitol Hill.

This month, we are continuing to build relationships with key members of Congress, attend targeted political events, and advocate for policies that protect your earned benefits and strengthen the federal workforce. None of this work is possible without the support of committed members like you.

As we move further into 2026, we must remain vigilant and proactive. A strong NARFE-PAC allows us to respond quickly to harmful proposals and support champions who will defend your retirement security, your health benefits, and the integrity of the merit-based civil service.

**Helen Zajac, Chair**

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## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

We had an increase of membership due to some National snafus with our members that paid with receipts requiring me to let Denise Curry at National to correct our membership list. They still have some members with expired memberships when I checked today. Ugh. Yesterday they had our membership at 235. No members dropped. Huh?

As of 2-15-2026:

Total Current Chapter Members 234. Total National Members in Chapter Area 157. Total Chapter plus National Members 391. Current Chapter Members Breakdown: 1 Year 76, 2 Year 26, 3 Year 21, Dues Withhold 99, Life Members 12. I urge those of you who renew 1 year, 2 years, and 3 years to consider paying through dues withholding. It is simple and you can reduce your membership costs and save me from sending you a second reminder.

No deaths or new members, just members that were added due to National's slow correction of their files.

Gentle reminder that National has the following Chapter members expired on 11/30/25, James Menke & Estevan Quesada; 12/31/25, Armando Banaag, 1/31/26, Jo Anne Lane, Joe Pecoraro, Latanga Rush, Cathleen Thompson. Please don't panic if you paid. You might not have paid your \$11 chapter dues or, as recently, National has been slow to input or made mistakes in inputting your membership. Please provide proof and I'll contact National to make the correction.

Second notices will be written to chapter members who will expire on 3/31/26, James Carpenter, Patricia Chapman, Brendajo Hardesty, Jackie Johnson, Vallarie Kilkenny, Thomas Knapp, & John Watson.

**Special thanks to those that renewed: Donald Barnes, George Cooksey & James Porter.**

**Robin Leong, Chair**

**NEED INFORMATION? PLEASE CALL  
ONE OF THESE FRIENDLY MEMBERS:**

President, Karen Anne McCann	246-5523
First VP, Robin Leong	643-1287
Second VP, James Porter	642-4980
Secretary, Laura Jean Pearson	925-586-7058
Treasurer, Melanie McCrossin	342-0928
Legislative Chair, Helen Zajac	644-7565
Hospitality, Monte Simmons	644-2159
HQ Federal Benefit Inst. 1 800-456-8410 option 2	
Sunshine, Connie Boucher	255-7968
Publicity, open	
Membership, Robin Leong	643-1287
Web coordinator, Melanie McCrossin	342-0928
<a href="https://www.facebook.com/NARFE16">https://www.facebook.com/NARFE16</a>	
<a href="https://www.narfe.org/chapter0016/">(https://www.narfe.org/chapter0016/)</a>	

**HOSPITALITY REPORT**

There were 30 at the February meeting. **It is one of our most popular meetings** when Larry Fade explains current tax laws. We think we understood everything he said until we look at our own taxes later. Then we can consult his multipage handout for details. Fine refreshments were offered at the end of the meeting. **Monte Simmons, Chair**

**SUNSHINE REPORT**

A get-well card was sent to Karen Anne McCann.  
**Connie Boucher, Chair**

**AUDIT OF BOOKS**

The audit committee of Monte Simmons, Howard Fitzpatrick and Gordon Triemert examined the books and made a report. The budget was approved.

**ALZHEIMER'S REPORT**

Research in medicine has provided us with many drugs that are lifesaving and have dealt with diseases that not too long ago were considered incurable. For children, there was the Salk vaccine in 1955. For adults, we are still seeking answers to Alzheimer's which is much more complicated and does not seem to be caused by one virus. There have been some drugs that show promise and we have highlighted some of them in this column.

**Vaccines**

Now we have some good news from an unexpected source, a phenomenon that doctors call "**off-target benefits**," appearing after vaccinations, meaning that the shots do good things beyond preventing the

diseases they were designed to avert. (KFF Health News, Jan. 14, 2026.)

We are getting good news about unexpected results from routine shots like the annual flu shots, and one time RSV and shingles, which may inhibit mental decline, a part of Alzheimer's symptoms. The phenomenon was reported in The New York Times, Feb. 11, 2026 online. There is evidence dating back 25 years that shows reduced cardiovascular risk after flu shots.

**Unexpected benefits**

According to the story, Dr. Stefania Maggi, the lead author of a **recent meta-analysis**, published in the British journal Age and Ageing, '*found reduced risks of dementia after vaccination for an array of diseases. Given those "downstream effects," she said, vaccines "are key tools to promote healthy aging and prevent physical and cognitive decline.*'

**Shingles and lower rates of dementia**

The old shingles vaccination and current shingles vaccination (Shingrix) show remarkable findings. Researchers made headlines last year when they documented an association between shingles vaccination and lower rates of dementia — even with the less effective vaccine that has since been replaced by Shingrix, approved in 2017. (NYT).

**104 million people**

KFF Health News reported that "in 21 studies involving more than 104 million participants in Europe, Asia, and North America, vaccination against shingles was associated with a 24% reduction in the risk of developing dementia. Flu vaccination was linked to a 13% reduction. Those vaccinated against pneumococcal disease had a 36% reduction in Alzheimer's risk."

We can now look at our vaccinations in a new positive way. Kudos to science.

**Our donations go to national for research.**

**Checks should be made out to NARFE**

**Alzheimer's Research.** Write our chapter number 16 on the check and send it to PO Box 1164, Vallejo, CA 94590. In our new fiscal year we have \$210. Thank you for your donations.

**James Porter, Chair**

**ALZHEIMER'S DONATION**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of donation to national: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# NARFE

Vallejo Chapter #16

PO Box 1164

Vallejo, CA 94590

**March 2026**

**Return service requested**

**Dated Material – Time Value**

## SPEAKERS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Our February speaker was Larry Fade on IRS and FTB 2025 tax filing changes. The March speaker is **Jane Keene from Carquinez Village**. She'll be talking about their volunteer opportunities and the benefits of being a member.

We are sending email newsletters each month, and by US mail every other month to those who do not have email. This issue is being sent by email only.

*(This issue was edited by Ivars Lauersons, with editorial assistance by Melanie McCrossin.)*

**Next meeting is Tuesday,  
March 10 @ 1:30 p.m.**

**Please respect the activities of  
groups that share the room with  
us for short periods.**

**Executive Board** meets the second Tuesday of each month at 12:30 p.m.  
**Regular meeting** is the second Tuesday of each month at 1:30 p.m.  
Both monthly meetings are held at the Florence Douglas Center,  
333 Amador Street, Vallejo, CA 94590.