

**NARFE Chapter 131
General Membership Meeting**

September 5, 2023 @ 12:45 PM PST

Officers attending: President Mike Teefy, Vice-president Charlie Caughlan, Treasurer Jim Ellis, and Secretary Linda Wallers.

Members and guests attending included Marvin Wells, Lowell Kenedy, Dea VanKley (new), Gordon Anderson, Morrie Berez, Beckie Berez (spouse), and Larry Moller.

Featured speakers:

Tanisha Harris, Outreach Director, SWWA for Senator Marie Cantwell's Vancouver office, and Caitlin Harrington, SWWA Director for Patty Murray's Vancouver office.

Senator Cantwell, who will be running for re-election in 2024, is the Chair of the powerful Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, along with GOP Ranking Member, Ted Cruz. Tanisha discussed several areas that Senator Cantwell is currently working on including:

- Promoting the confirmation of Mike Whitaker as the next Head of the Federal Aviation Administration Administrator.
- Hosting a "Future of AI" forum and panel about how innovations in artificial intelligence (AI) are critical to tackling challenges like climate change and natural disasters, the need to build and train a skilled workforce and how Congress can ensure AI is deployed safely and equitably.
- Conducting a listening tour of Washington State to hear from those on the front lines of the fentanyl crisis. Following the passage of the FEND of Fentanyl Act (July, 2023) Senator Cantwell spoke on the floor of the Senate describing the consequences of fentanyl and the extent of the crisis.
- Focusing the 2024 appropriations requests (earmarks) on children/schools, citizens health/safety, the workforce/training, among other requests.

Senator Murray, who was re-elected in 2022, chairs one of the most important committees in Congress – Appropriations (Where the money goes/how it is spent). She also sits on the US Senate Committee on the Budget, on Veteran's Affairs, Defense, and Homeland Security – all critical assignments, among several others. Caitlin talked about Senator Murray's

- Co-sponsoring the Protect Women's Retirement Act (co-sponsored by Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Lauren Underwood (D-IL-14) to help women overcome barriers that systematically set them back from achieving financial security in retirement. The Act would strengthen consumer protections to safeguard retirement savings, enhance and bolster women's financial literacy through grants, and support low-income women and survivors of domestic abuse seeking retirement benefits.
- Leading the Appropriations Committee in the bipartisan passage of all 12 of the Senate's spending bills, which still need to pass in the full Senate and be negotiated/reconciled with the House budget bill. Her focus is to return to the Committee and the Senate to the historical precedent of passing all 12 appropriations bills ON TIME, (before September 30).
- Working to protect Social Security and Medicare by asking the wealthiest to kick in their share. She wants to focus on the solutions that actually protect seniors and ensure that

NARFE Chapter 131 General Membership Meeting

they get the hard-earned benefits they worked decades to receive. She believes cuts should be OFF the TABLE.

Linda added that Senator Murray should look into the effects of the death of a spouse on the survivors. Women, in particular, get a pay cut on the death of a spouse, but the bills don't get reduced. It would be beneficial to allow continued dual income payments with a gradual decrease over some period (perhaps over a 5-year period) to help pay down any medical debt and acclimatize the survivor to less income. Mike asked about how to apply for one of the service academies – if applicants should apply to one of the three offices or all (Representative and both senators). How many slots is each state allocated for service academies?

Announcements:

Nominating Committee: Lowell, the chapter nominating committee “chair,” is looking for volunteers to serve as president, vice-president, and treasurer – all of the current occupants of those positions are term-limited and have exceeded their terms already. More information is below.

Alzheimer's Walk: Reminding our members that the Alzheimer's walk is on September 24th at Ester Short Park. Anyone wanting to make a donation can access the site through the blue link in the digital newsletter (page 3)

Reports

Secretary: Linda distributed a copy of the June general meeting minutes for corrections or additions. Linda asked for any corrections, additions, retractions. Hearing none, she asked Mike to call for a motion.

Motion to approve: The motion to accept the June meeting minutes was made by Marvin and seconded by Lowell to accept the minutes as written. The vote was unanimous.

Treasurer: Jim sent out the treasurer's report to the board members. He also had the reports from June and July. Mike said he only needed to report on the August details. Linda suggested he summarize the June and July reports with the August report.

Dividends: Over the summer, the chapter received its first quarterly dividend (\$42.42) from the %5,000 CD investment made in April at the IQCU. Mike suggested moving another small amount to a second CD.

Dues receipts are down: The dues receipts are down \$181 from August 2022. We are losing members for various reasons.

Motion to Approve: The motion to accept the August treasurer's Report and summary of June-July was made by Linda and seconded by Lowell. The vote was unanimous.

President/2023 chapter elections: Mike talked about the election of officers coming up. According to the bylaws, the President, Vice President, and Treasurer have exceeded their term-limits and should not be eligible again. However, the Bylaws also say that officers stay in their roles until successors are elected/appointed. The question is, will they have volunteers for the open offices, will they just stay in place, or will they swap positions? Lowell Kenedy, as the entire nominating committee will be working his magic to get volunteers.

NARFE Chapter 131 General Membership Meeting

Election Calendar: The schedule, at this point is announcement of the election (September); call for nominations in October; nominations accepted in November; voting in December; and installation in January. If there are no volunteers, the officers will have to switch jobs around a bit, except for Linda as secretary/membership-sunshine chair/webmaster and co-editor of the newsletter – her plate is full.

Legislative: President Biden has proposed a 5.2% federal raise (4.5% raise and 0.5% locality pay) for in 2024, unless Congress changes it. Mike wrote about upcoming legislation in his legislative Corner article. This included [Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act of 2023](#) (HR 4260) which would adjust the WEP provision for Social Security and [Social Security 2100 Act](#) (HR 4583), submitted by John Larson (D-CT-1) that would make sweeping changes to Social Security.

GOP Debate: Mike ran down a list of the highlights from the GOP Debate (Aug 23). Overall, the candidates attacked federal employees/"the administrative state."

- Former Governor of Arkansas Asa Hutchinson cited his vast federal experience and made the most direct comments regarding the civil service, indicating that he would cut the administrative state by 10%.
- Florida Governor Ron DeSantis strongly favors Schedule F which makes every federal employee vulnerable to the whim of the political environment. He also wanted to send troops to the southern border.
- Entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, "blank slate" to most Americans, wants to eliminate FBI; the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF), IRS, Commerce Department, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission; wage war on the administrative state; send massive troops to the southern border; and reduce toxic regulations on the economy.
- Former Vice-president Mike Pence wants to eliminate Dept of Education and restore fiscal sanity.
- North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum is after the 87,000 new hires at the IRS. What most people don't understand is that the GOP is after the auditing tools used against Million/billionaires and large corporations, backers of the GOP.
- Senator Tim Scott (SC) also chimed in about the IRS and reducing their funding along with doubling up the border patrol.
- Former Ambassador Nikki Haley blamed both Democrats and Republicans for the deficit. She said they needed to stop spending and stop borrowing, eliminate earmarks, and understand that it is all taxpayer dollars, not theirs.
- Former governor of New Jersey Chris Christie criticized Donald Trump and unions while supporting Mike Pence's decision made on January 6, 2021 and the US support for Ukraine. He also wants to cut spending.

VP, Service Officer, NARFE PAC: Charlie said that there were service officer things going on that he could not discuss at this time.

Programs: The October program will feature Laura Ellsworth from the Council for the Homeless, postponed from May due to illness.

Web master/membership/sunshine: Linda reported that the newsletter was posted in all of the chapter and federation pages.

NARFE Chapter 131
General Membership Meeting

Membership Report: At the end of August the chapter has one new member in the report, plus Dea (Delta VanKley), making her first attendance at a meeting; two prospective members; three members renewed; and one member, Daryl E Rothfus, passed away. Linda said that she would send a sympathy card to the Rothfus family and send letters to the new and prospective members.

General membership meeting October 3, 2023 – doors open at 11:30 AM
The next Executive board virtual meeting will be on October 2 at 11:00.

Linda Wallers
NARFE Chapter 131 (Vancouver) secretary