

Chapter Officers

Mike Mellish, President & Newsletter Editor | **Norris Alderson**, Vice President | **Betty Waters**, Secretary
Eric Kareh, Treasurer & Webmaster | **Chapter Website:** <https://www.narfe.org/chapter0227>

NARFE's mission has remained the same since 1921, to protect and improve the benefits of federal retirees, employees and their families.

CHAPTER MEETINGS

Mike Mellish, President, called our March 18 meeting to order. Nine members participated. Raymond Schmidt led the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence was observed for the devotional.

The primary focus of our meeting was the chapter's forthcoming participation in the 70th Annual TN Federation Meeting in April. By a unanimous vote, members approved the use of chapter funds of up to \$50 to purchase an item for the Alzheimer's auction. As this year's meeting was being held in Brentwood, all chapter members were highly encouraged to attend. See section below labeled "TN Federation Meeting: April 14-15" for a summary of the proceedings. Other items discussed at our March meeting were the recent passage of the NARFE Referendum which established standard terms of office for all members of NARFE's Executive Board, and the chapter meeting schedule for the rest of 2026.

Next Chapter Meeting
 Wednesday, June 10, 2026 at 11:00 a.m.
 Olive Garden Italian Restaurant,
 1712 Galleria Blvd, Franklin, TN

Our next chapter meeting will be a luncheon at the [Cool Springs-Franklin Olive Garden](#) restaurant located west of I-65 (Exit 69) and just south of Moores Lane on Galleria Blvd. If interested in attending, please contact Mike Mellish by phone or email so we can obtain an approximate headcount. While they do not take reservations, we can call ahead on the morning of our lunch and they will try their best to have a table ready for our group. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to any of our officers.

OFFICER REPORTS & OTHER NEWS

Eric Kareh, Treasurer, reports that as of May 15 we had \$2,766.95 in our Truist checking account. During the months of March-May, the chapter received \$209.72 in dues rebates from NARFE HQ.

Eric mailed a check for \$100 to NARFE HQ on March 21 as payment for the chapter's liability insurance coverage for the period June 16, 2026-June 15, 2027. He gave a check for \$102.85 to Mike Mellish on March 24 to reimburse him for three months of Zoom subscription costs (\$44.52) and the costs of printing and mailing the August and November 2025 newsletters and the holiday luncheon announcement (\$58.33). Eric completed and filed our Form 990-N (e-Postcard) for Tax-Exempt Organizations for tax year 2025 with the IRS on February 23.

Below is a tentative meeting schedule for 2026. Please note that this schedule is available at our Chapter 227 website and will be updated as the year progresses. In addition to possible changes in the schedule and/or meeting locations, we anticipate the addition of one or more special one-topic meetings. For updates be sure to visit the meetings section of our website:

<https://www.narfe.org/chapter0227/meetings-events/meetings/>.

Tentative Newsletter/Meeting Schedule for 2026

| Newsletter | Meeting Date | Meeting Type | Time |
|------------|--------------|------------------|------------|
| February | March 18 | Zoom | 10:30 a.m. |
| May | June 10 | Lunch | 11:00 a.m. |
| August | September 9 | Zoom | 10:30 a.m. |
| November | December 9 | Holiday Luncheon | 11:00 a.m. |

NARFE's 2026 election process is currently underway. Members will be asked to vote for National President, National Secretary/Treasurer, and a Regional Vice President. A number of proposed amendments to NARFE's bylaws will also be on the ballot. Voting is set to start on August 15 and end on September 30. Information about this year's election will be provided at the [NARFE website](#), on [FEDHub](#) postings in the "2026 NARFE National/Regional Candidates" community, and in

the June/July, August, and September issues of *NARFE Magazine*. Instructions for requesting mailed ballots or PINs for online voting will be published in the September issue. This process differs from past elections where individualized ballots for members, including a voting PIN, were provided to members as an insert in the mailed copy of their *NARFE Magazine*.

The chapter extends a warm welcome to Vicki Coons who came back onboard as a newly reinstated member of Chapter 227 in March.

U.S. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

In an unprecedented turn of events sparked by a 6-3 decision issued by the U.S. Supreme Court on April 29 in a [case](#) concerning Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, the Tennessee legislature moved quickly to repeal a 1972 law that had prohibited mid-decade redistricting ([HB 7002](#)), and sent a new set of [U.S. Congressional District maps \(HB 7003\)](#) to the governor, which he signed into law the very same day (May 7). As a result, for the second time in four years major changes to the boundaries of the U.S. Congressional Districts (CDs) in and around the greater Nashville area means that many of us will vote for candidates in a different CD later this year.

While most members of Chapter 227 are currently served by U.S. Congressional Representatives in TN Districts 4, 5, 6, and 7, a significant number of us will cast votes this year in [TN District 9](#), whose current constituents live primarily in or near Memphis. Because the primary purpose of this year's mid-cycle redistricting was to eliminate Tennessee's last remaining Democratic-held CD, Rep. Steve Cohen—who has served District 9 since January 2007—announced that he will not be running for re-election. This is definitely a loss for federal employees and annuitants, as Mr. Cohen has consistently voted in support of our federal community. NARFE's most recent [Congressional Scorecard](#) revealed that Rep. Cohen voted in support of NARFE's key issues 100% of the time during the 118th Congress, and 97% of the time over the length of his Congressional career.

You can look up your new CD by entering your full mailing address at: <http://tncot.cc/tndistrict>. Given that many counties are [not planning to mail out notices](#) to voters whose CDs have changed, we encourage members to be proactive and look-up their new CD online. Dates to put on your calendar

for this year's [Primary and General Elections](#) are: Thursday, August 6; and Tuesday, November 3.

TN FEDERATION MEETING: APRIL 14-15

The 70th Annual Tennessee Federation Meeting was attended by approximately 30 members/guests from across the state, with 8 out of 11 chapters represented. Five members from Chapter 227 attended.

As part of commemorating the Federation's 70th year, the board put together a comprehensive list of past Federation Presidents that began with Walter Wooten, who served from 1957-59, and ended with Linda Heaton who stepped forward and took the helm as our 38th Federation President in 2024.

The two-day event featured approximately a dozen speakers. In addition to talks provided by NARFE National Secretary/Treasurer Cindy Renéé Blythe and Region X VP Robert Allen, individuals from the TN Alzheimer's Association, NARFE Headquarters (provided via Zoom), and the Office of the TN Attorney General gave an array of interesting and informative presentations. Representatives from BlueCross BlueShield of TN, UnitedHealthcare, and Aetna—three of the sponsors for this year's event—also presented and were on hand to answer questions. Slides for some presentations, with more to come, are available for viewing and download from the Federation website: <https://www.narfe.org/tn/meetings-events/meetings/>.

Highlights from this year's meeting:

1. Linda Heaton, TN Federation President, highlighted accomplishments and challenges of the last year. Positives included: 1) hosting the bi-annual Region X meeting in Pigeon Forge that drew approximately 70 attendees; 2) working with Street Level Studio (NARFE's marketing vendor) in a joint venture with the KY Federation to conduct a high-tech Geofencing/Geotargeting online ad campaign to increase awareness of NARFE in key geographic areas of TN and KY; and 3) participation in recruitment events at two health fairs and making use of newly acquired NARFE banners, tablecloths, and printed information cards. On the downside, the Federation experienced the loss of yet one more chapter in 2025 following the closure of Chapter 324 (Johnson City) last Fall.
2. Federation Secretary Karen Voshel, along with Chapter Presidents and Linda Heaton, conducted a Memorial Service recognizing the 28 members from

across the State, both Chapter and National-Only, who died during the past year.

3. National Secretary/Treasurer Cindy René Blythe delivered an overview of all things happening at NARFE HQ. A key focus area of her talk was membership. She noted that the net loss of 156 members nationwide in 2025 was actually one of the best years in recent times, particularly when compared with 2022 when membership fell by 14,156, or 9.1%. Cindy noted that NARFE currently has approximately 550 local chapters, and shared the unfortunate news that 62 chapters were lost in 2025 due to closures.

4. John Hatton, Staff VP of Policy and Programs at NARFE, provided a comprehensive rundown of the numerous tactics being used by the current Administration to assail the federal workforce and to ultimately reshape the federal government. Items John touched on included: 1) the impact of the Deferred Resignation Program (DRP); 2) the implementation of a lengthy hiring freeze; 3) the issuance of a return-to-office mandate; 4) the elimination of agencies such as the U.S. Agency for International Development resulting in mass firings of staff; and 5) pending Schedule Policy/Career (P/C) reclassifications of positions that will effectively strip civil service protections from 50,000 or more federal workers. He also spoke about various issues with services provided by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Retirement Center, including that some members have been unable to get through to a Customer Service Specialist on the phone...at all!

5) RJ Thacker, Manager, Policy and Programs at NARFE, provided a thought-provoking talk that raised serious concerns about the future of the federal workforce, the ability of agencies to continue to provide services to the American public, and possible threats to earned retirement and healthcare benefits. RJ also gave a shout-out to the importance of NARFE-PAC sharing that our support helps to: 1) keep in office lawmakers who have stood up against efforts to harm federal employees; and 2) elect new leaders who understand that a strong government workforce benefits the entire nation.

6. Robert Allen gave a shout out to the TN Federation and Chapter 1678 (Sevierville) for hosting last year's successful Region X meeting in Pigeon Forge, TN. He indicated that the next meeting will take place in Virginia in 2027, perhaps

in the Roanoke area. Robert also brought up a couple of issues regarding the OPM. One being a serious concern regarding a [proposal](#) to begin collecting claims-level health data of federal workers and retirees from our FEHB/PSHB insurers. A second was the difficulty many annuitants ran into this year when attempting to obtain physical [copies of their 1099-R forms](#).

7. Norris Alderson, Federation Treasurer, reported that the Federation is in excellent financial condition! Bank balances at the end of CY2025 totaled \$45,877.46, and stood at \$46,003.08 at the end of March 2026. Dues rebates from NARFE HQ in 2025 came to \$8,605.95. The Federation receives 10% of the national dues paid by both chapter and national-only members.

8. The Weida White Tolley Memorial Alzheimer's Trophy was awarded to Chapter 727 (Dickson). The winner of the Leo Potts Memorial NARFE-PAC Award went to Chapter 1678 (Sevierville). Congratulations and thanks to the members of both chapters! We are also happy to report that members and friends of Chapter 227 contributed \$498 to the NARFE Alzheimer's Research Fund during 2025. Vernell Anderson, Federation NARFE-PAC Chair, reported that PAC contributions from NARFE members in Tennessee came to \$5,109 in 2025, which was nearly double the amount of \$2,724 contributed by members in 2024.

9. The winners of the two cash prizes awarded to this year's attendees were: Patricia Franklin, Chapter 727 (Dickson): \$100 Early Bird Registration Prize; and Ronnie Born, Chapter 108 (Chattanooga): \$50 Door Prize.

10. The meeting came to a close with the installation of officers by Regional VP, Robert Allen. Sworn in were Linda Heaton as Federation President/Newsletter Editor; Tim Powers, Vice President; Norris Alderson, Treasurer; Bob Wightman, Secretary; Rhonda Mooney, Membership Chair; B.J. Godwin, Immediate Past President/Service Officer; and Vernell Anderson, NARFE-PAC Chair.

FEDERAL WORKFORCE UPDATE

According to the most recent [data published by OPM](#) the federal government employed just over 2.0 million workers as of March 31, 2026, down from about 2.3 million when the Trump Administration took over in January 2025 (data exclude military personnel and postal workers). The actual unrounded decrease of 278,272 is the net result of

420,101 separations and 141,819 hires (see Table). OPM data indicate that 127,204 federal employees retired during 2025, and another 32,282 have retired during the first three months of 2026.

Cumulative Changes in the Federal Workforce*

| Workforce Statistic | 1/20/25 thru 12/31/25 | 1/20/25 thru 3/31/26 | Difference |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Total Separations | 352,285 | 420,101 | 67,816 |
| DRP Separations | 123,801 | 139,628 | 15,827 |
| Other Separations | 228,484 | 280,473 | 51,989 |
| Accessions (aka Hires) | 110,025 | 141,819 | 31,794 |
| Net Change in Workforce | -242,260 | -278,272 | 36,012 |

Source: U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Federal Workforce Data, website: <https://data.opm.gov/>.

*Data excludes postal workers and military personnel.

DRP: Deferred Resignation Program

For a comprehensive accounting of what has transpired with regard to the federal workforce and the agencies they work for since January of last year, we encourage members to read the two-part series “The Civil Service After Trump 2.0” written by David Tobenkin and published in the April and May 2026 issues of *NARFE Magazine*. Part I focuses on reductions in the size of the federal workforce and agency eliminations and reorientations. Part II evaluates the politicization of the federal workforce, increasing control being exerted by the Administration over how federal agencies operate, the multi-faceted effort being employed to undermine legally-grounded civil service protections of workers, and the ongoing elimination of union representation and collective bargaining rights at agencies.

IN MEMORIAM

We are extremely sad to report the recent loss of three of our chapter members. Our hearts go out to their families and friends.

[Ann Gentry Moran](#)

Ann passed away on January 29, 2026 at the age of 91. She was a member of NARFE for more than 30 years, and was honored as a Distinguished Member in October 2017.

Ann is survived by her husband and devoted partner, Paul Moran, and her brother, William Gentry.

She was a proud graduate of the University of Tennessee at Martin, and enjoyed a career as a budget manager with the federal government. Beyond her professional accomplishments and spiritual devotion, Ann took great pleasure in cooking, especially baking. Her warm kitchen was a place of love and delight, where she would create memorable treats for friends and family alike.

[Phyllis Branan](#)

Phyllis passed away on March 6, 2026 at the age of 91. She was a member of NARFE for more than 27 years. Phyllis was honored as a Distinguished Member in August 2021, and was awarded a Distinguished Service certificate in June 2024 in recognition of her outstanding contributions as Chaplain of NARFE Chapter 227 from 2011 thru 2018.

A graduate of Franklin County High School, Phyllis received degrees in Secondary Education and Public Administration from the University of Tennessee. She retired from the Department of Defense as an Education Services Specialist in 1997 after serving in previous positions at the Internal Revenue Service and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. In her retirement, Phyllis and her husband Jim enjoyed traveling to numerous destinations both domestic and foreign. They especially enjoyed their 30 plus years of annual trips to Panama City Beach, FL, where they spent time with their “beach” family.

Our hearts go out to Phyllis’ daughter Marie, grandsons Watson and Nolan, and to the entire family. She is greatly missed by all of us at Chapter 227.

[Mary Louise Stansell](#)

Mary passed away on April 17, 2026 at the age of 88. She had a long career with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) here in Nashville, retiring as a revenue officer. After retirement Mary and her longtime companion, Jack Roth, opened Mar-Jac’s Bygone Days, a beloved local antique/rental shop in Franklin. Mary was an avid reader, plant collector and animal lover, and she enjoyed watching NASCAR races!

While Mary had not attended chapter meetings these past few years, she had been a very active member and was fondly remembered for conducting raffles at monthly meetings. Several of our chapter members worked with Mary at the IRS and had remained in touch.