



ANNANDALE

February 2026

## CHAPTER 1159 NEWS

**National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association Annandale**

P.O. Box 1463, Annandale, VA 22003

**Advocacy – Education – Community**


Serving Current, Former, & Retired Federal Employees. Their Spouses & Survivor Annuitants

We meet at **John Calvin Presbyterian Church**, 6531 Columbia Pike, Annandale, Virginia

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 4, 2026. Snacks & visiting 9A.M.**

**Meeting begins 9:30 A.M. If you can't attend in person, please use the following Zoom link to attend the meeting online:**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83881063394?pwd=zNbnjyOtAcfMbou9CCYtaIm0,3VsPk9.1>**

 Like us on Facebook at **[NARFE-Annandale 1159](#)**

**Visit our newly renovated website at <https://www.narfe.org/chapter1159/>**

Explore what the Virginia NARFE Federation offers at: **<https://www.narfe.org/va/>**

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*Normal Inclement Weather Policy --When Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) are closed or “virtual only” because of inclement weather on the day of a scheduled chapter meeting, the chapter meeting that month (both in-person and on Zoom) is canceled. If the FCPS is open only 2 hours late on that day, the in-person and the Zoom meeting will be held.*

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**Apologies:** Because the weather was uncertain and our February speaker was presenting on Zoom, a decision was made to hold the meeting via Zoom and to cancel the in-person. This exception to the normal rule was made late in the afternoon the day before. Sincere apologies to those who did not get the word in time; it was a last-minute decision.

**NARFE National Bylaws - Be sure to vote** in the current NARFE referendum which proposes changing the term of officers (which requires a revision to the National Bylaws). The deadline for voting deadline February 24, 2024. **<https://www.narfe.org/2026-referendum/>**

**Express your interests in national affairs** through your elected officials. NARFE makes it easy to send your views to your Congressional Representatives and Senators. Go to: **[https://www.narfe.org/advocacy/legislative-action-center/?\\_zs=sg3Io&\\_zl=Oice3](https://www.narfe.org/advocacy/legislative-action-center/?_zs=sg3Io&_zl=Oice3)**

**Region Affiliation** - Our chapter is now in Region X where Ted Pasek from Fairfax serves as the Regional Vice President. This should help even out the workload for the regional officers.

## **PREZ SEZ**

**Kim Rendelson, Chapter President**

As I write this, I am looking at the frozen tundra in the backyard. Big blocks of ice fill our front yard which remind me of the ice blocks the iceman used to deliver to my grandmother's 6<sup>th</sup> floor walk-up in Manhattan. Our snow shoveler spent hours carving out those ice blocks so we could eventually drive down our driveway. We've had bad snowstorms in the past, but I don't remember seeing such large ice blocks. As always, the DC area does not handle snow well. Having just transferred here from Chicago, in 1977-78, I stopped at a grocery store on my way home for a quart of milk when a snowstorm was pending -- the store was a mob scene, lines were all the way to the back of the store. I asked what was going on and was told that a snowstorm was coming. O-K-A-Y?!? I turned around and left -- Despite the behavior of the crowds, I knew we weren't going to be trapped until Spring!

I read an article many years ago that said part of the problem is that we have more moisture in the air here than other places, such as Denver. Because of that moisture we end up with an undercoating of ice on our roads that makes it more difficult to drive and our many hills add to the driving adventure. According to AI, "Drivers in the Washington, D.C. area struggle with snow due to a combination of infrequent, icy, and wet snow, limited infrastructure for rapid snow removal, and high-density, high-speed traffic. The region experiences a mix of freezing rain and sleet, which is more dangerous than snow, often causing gridlock and dangerous, icy, and unplowed roads".

I was pleased that so many of you were able to hear our last speaker via Zoom. With snow projected for the night before, and the presenter basically waiting in the wings, I decided to go ahead with a Zoom meeting. I now know how our school administrators feel when they cancel school or call for a delayed start and then we don't have even one flake!

I had said I would work on our sound issues this month, but I came down with COVID which put me out of commission for 2 solid weeks. This was my second go around with COVID but at least this time I was at home and not trying to take care of myself in a European hotel. I will be doing research this month to try and come up with some solutions for our sound issues. In the meantime: Keep Warm!

**February's Speaker:** Gabe Goldberg introduced USA Today bestselling author Alan Jacobson. USA Today bestselling author Alan Jacobson. Mr. Jacobson discussed the difference between fact and fiction as depicted in his crime, mystery, and intelligence community stories. Jacobson has written fifteen best-selling novels about diverse law enforcement agencies and characters; his writing tagline is, "Characters to root for. Endings to die for"—and that definitely describes his books. In 1994, during his first hands-on research effort involving a blood spatter class at the Department of Justice's Criminalistics Institute, he met a profiler with the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit. That opened doors to FBI seminars, Quantico visits, and research alongside senior FBI profilers whose insights and personal tutoring formed the foundation of his characters and novels.

Over thirty years, Jacobson has applied this same behind-the-scenes, hands-on approach to researching law enforcement agencies and officers who perform the jobs he writes about. His novels have been optioned by Hollywood and one has been adapted to screen by acclaimed Czech screenwriter Juri Hubac. You can discover more on Jacobson's novels at [www.AlanJacobson.com](http://www.AlanJacobson.com).

Mr. Jacobson spoke to his love of novel writing, of the creative process, and of the key ingredient of deep research to produce a believable and effective story. He began his interest in college, where he gained a degree in English. One particular professor lambasted a short story he had written because it contained a plot that was not feasible given the stated condition of one of the key characters. Mr. Jacobson did not go into writing as a profession at first. But his exposure to the FBI, criminal forensics, and criminal profiling brought a wealth of information and a fascination with how crimes were solved.

Overtime he produced the Karen Vail series centered on profiling and the Operations Special Interest Group (OPSIG) Team Black series around espionage, covert, and intelligence work. These were possible because of a growing network of personal contacts with expertise in a wide variety of fields with contact with the FBI, the CIA, the Marshall service, and the DEA. Occasionally this expands to other domains, such as NASA when the story takes his characters to the moon. Details allow even individuals familiar with these agencies and operations to not be diverted from the story by weak or incorrect details. Some of the contacts required gaining clearance by the agency and, in one case, approval by a Congressional subcommittee.

Mr. Jacobson related his two basic principles: 1. Write what you know (advice given by most) and 2. A corollary of his own: what you don't know, research. He gains ideas from normal observations or suggestions. He is constantly looking for another story line to add to his repertoire with an eye for details, props, and depth. The research is essential but very hard work to the production of a believable, interesting, and successful novel. But sufficient research anchors the story in a sense of reality and keeps readers engaged. His writing tagline,

"characters to root for, endings to die for," encapsulates his commitment to creating engaging and realistic narratives.

Asked about writer's block, he noted that is a real issue. It can be from inadequate ground work or the lack of a sufficiently robust outline. Some writers have a general outline for their work, others have a more specific outline, not just across the scope of the work, to the point of outlines for every chapter. His general advice was just to keep writing without regard for whether it may be used or useful. It can always be deleted, edited, or built upon later. But by keeping your mind active in the process, you can often find your way out of the period of blocked progress. Mr. Jacobson emphasized his dependence on the expertise and knowledge of others in his network of personal contacts and professionals.

**Programs for 2026 – Gabe Goldberg** has outlined our meeting programs for the new year. Mark your calendar for the 1<sup>st</sup> **Wednesday of each month** for our membership meetings.

- **March 4 - Steve Gurney** will provide a new Perspective on Aging. Mr. Gurney is a nationally recognized leader, innovator, and advocate in the field of aging and longevity. As the founder of the Positive Aging Community and Positive Aging SourceBook, Steve has dedicated over 35 years to empowering individuals, families, and organizations to make informed decisions about aging and senior living. The Retirement Living SourceBook is a comprehensive resource that quickly expanded across the Mid-Atlantic to serve the DC metro, Maryland, and Philadelphia regions. He offers significant and relevant content, podcasts, and a robust schedule of live and interactive discussions with thought leaders in aging. Steve's innovative approach includes fostering connections among the most influential senior-serving professionals and organization online and in-person.
- **April 1** – We have **Heather Long, the Navy Federal Credit Union chief economist**, coming to speak to us. The Washington Post says “She was formerly an award-winning columnist, editorial board member and U.S. economics correspondent for The Post from 2017 to 2025. She is widely known for spotting trends early and making economic news accessible to all. Before joining The Post, she was a senior economics reporter at CNN and a columnist and deputy editor at the Patriot-News in Harrisburg, Pa. She also worked at an investment firm in London and was a Rhodes Scholar. Educated at Wellesley College, BA in economics and English and at Oxford University, master's in financial economics and medieval literature. She is often heard on radio, television, and in podcasts.
- **May 6** – **Mary Ann Munley** will invite speakers for the annual Report from Richmond.

- **June 3 – Luncheon at Italian Café** – The restaurant room has been reserved. More information cost and individual reservations will be forthcoming. Put it on your calendar now and attend a great time of food, fellowship, and the Alzheimer’s raffle.



**Alzheimer’s Report** Our goal for donations for 2026 is \$4,000. So far, we have \$120 collected. A basket is available for cash or check donations at the welcome table for our meetings. Checks should be made out to **NARFE Alzheimer’s Research Fund** with a memo note **Chapter 1159**. All contributions are appreciated. In a recent update on what is being discovered to combat this disease: **Lydia Patrick, Newsweek** wrote:

**Common Drug Could Stop Alzheimer’s Process ‘Before It Even Begins’**, Feb 12, 2026: “A medication that has been prescribed in the U.S. for decades may be able to stop the earliest steps of Alzheimer’s disease— but only if it is taken long before symptoms appear, according to new research from Northwestern University. Scientists report that levetiracetam, an inexpensive anti-seizure drug approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, can prevent brain cells from producing one of the most toxic proteins linked to Alzheimer’s.”

### Hospitality

**Sharon Sellers, Chair**

Sharon Sellers encourages those who had volunteered to bring refreshments for February to bring them to the March meeting. She noted that the inclement weather had caused the Mason District Police to delay the distribution of the PJ and Slippers, but they would be given out later. Sharon will be having surgery so Joyce Price and Jenna Arvanitis have graciously agreed to fill in during her absence. Thank you, ladies! Our thoughts and prayers will be with Sharon.

### Legislation Report

**Mary Ann Munley, Chair**



**Federal Budget: With passage of H.R. 7148 Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026:** Congress has passed and the Administration has signed this bill which provides appropriations for most federal departments and agencies for the remainder of FY2026. It also extends various expiring programs and authorities. However, the bill only provides a short-term Continuing Resolution (CR) for the

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for funding through February 13, 2026. While a lot of the current focus on DHS centers around activities of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP), keep in mind, DHS also encompasses the Secret Service, TSA, Coast Guard and FEMA. The question is whether the Senate can pass another CR extension for DHS to send to the House for a vote before the House starts its next recess on February 13. It is doubtful that the Senate can pass a bill for DHS funding through the end of the Fiscal Year by Feb 13 without agreement to place certain operating guardrails over ICE and CBP into the DHS Appropriation bill.

**Executive Order (E.O.) 1417** dated January 20, 2025: **Restoring Accountability to Policy-Influencing Positions within the Federal Workforce:** The US Office of Personnel Management (OPM) announced the final rule establishing the current Administration’s desire to

create Schedule Policy/Career (formerly known as Schedule F) in the excepted service, a key civil service reform aimed at strengthening accountability, improving performance, and reinforcing a merit-based federal workforce. OPM states the roles to be moved into this new Schedule will remain career positions and continue to be filled through merit-based hiring procedures, including application of veterans' preference, but will no longer maintain all current civil service protections. More will come on the actual positions to be moved into the new Schedule and implementation process. There are estimates that up to 50,000 positions could be moved into Schedule P/C.

**Saving the Civil Service Act, H.R. 492/ S. 134.** This bill would block any position in the federal competitive service created after September 30, 2020 from being reclassified outside of merit system principles without the express consent of Congress and install a cap on the number of conversions to the frozen excepted service schedule (Schedule C), with the cap not to exceed more than one percent of the total number of employees, whichever is greater. Congress needs to pass this bill to prevent the Executive Order from moving forward unchecked. All of our local House Representatives and our 2 Senators are in favor of this bill, so please thank them for their critical support.



**VIRGINIA LEGISLATIVE NEWS** – The Virginia General Assembly is currently in session. During this session, the General Assembly must pass a 2-year balanced budget along with consideration of many Bills which change laws, possibly including changes to the tax code. Currently, 2 Bills have been referred to the House of Delegates Finance Committee which are of specific interest to the Virginia Federation of NARFE:

**HB 979: Tax Provisions; increases Standard Deduction:** this bill would permanently raise the State's Standard Deduction to \$10,000 single \$20,000 Married with inflation consideration for the future. HB 979 was introduced by Del Vivian Watts and several other legislators have introduced similar legislation with varying amounts. Without such legislation, the Standard Deduction would soon "sunset" back to \$3,000/\$6,000 depending on filing status. Disappointingly, this bill and a Senate Version has failed in Committee.

**HB 959 and HB 1351: Income Tax, State Retirement Income of Certain Federal Employees:** these two identical bills introduced by Del. Vivian Watts and Del. Jay Leftwich respectively would allow for a subtraction of 20% of a Federal Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) annuity from Virginia taxable income. While this bill may not pass in this session, especially in the current tight fiscal climate for the State, it is important that this issue was introduced by Del. Vivian Watts, an esteemed member of the Finance Committee which lends credibility to our issue. These Bills are items in the VFN State Legislation Plan. HB 959 would also create new tax brackets for income exceeding \$600,000. HB 1351 has been "laid on the table" for this committee session, but means it will live to see more consideration later.

**Virginia Constitutional Amendments:** The General Assembly has passed and the Governor has signed 4 proposed amendments which will be put forth to us in a Referendum vote: **On April 21, 2026**, a referendum vote on an amendment for allowing the out-of-cycle redistricting of US Congressional Districts between 2025 and 2030. A proposed map indicates many of us could be moved into a new District and could mean a change in your House Representatives (assuming that current House Reps all win in the midterms.) **On November 3, 2026**, three amendments will be voted on: Remove VA's Constitutional Same Sex Marriage Ban; Right to Reproductive Freedom; and, Voting Rights Restoration for Felons Upon Release.



**Virginia 2026 Federation Conference - April 13-15 Harrisonburg, Virginia at the Hotel Madison.** The theme this year is “[Your Voice, Your Future, Our Mission.](#)” **Room cost** is \$110/night plus tax and a block of rooms is being held under March 16th, 2026 until 5 pm, March 16th, 2026, or until the room block is full.

<https://reservations.travelclick.com/110365?groupID=4711158>

The Conference **Registration** is \$125 and includes full conference, welcome reception, conference banquet, two lunches, and several generous AM/PM snack breaks, access to all sessions, workshops, and presentations. There will be a karaoke night for fun and fellowship and a hospitality room, open at designated times for relaxed conversation, refreshments, and networking. Registration forms and information about the conference are now available online <https://www.narfe.org/va/conference>. We have budgeted to pay the early-bird registration fee for 3 attendees. We'll be placing a small ad in the program book and donating a basket to raffle off. **NOTE:** The price increases by \$25 on March 2<sup>nd</sup> so book early to get the early-bird price.

### **Useful Facts:**

**FEHB Plans with Medicare Part B Reimbursement** – A number of the Federal health plans take into account the benefit to the company that is possible when members are also covered by Medicare Part B. If you have one of these specific plans, you can receive a reimbursement that helps cover the Part B Premium (or premiums for couples). So, **check your policy or call your provider** to see if this applies to you. **Don't leave money on the table!** Each policy has a different reimbursement amount and they have a variety of ways to receive or apply the funds. But the reimbursement can be significant as the savings to you can range from \$800 to \$3000 **annually per person covered**. Some will also help cover IRMA costs. Here are some policies: FEP Blue (Blue Cross Blue Shield) Basic, Aetna Direct, Kaiser Permanente (High/Standard), GEHA High & Standard, Foreign Service, MHBP Standard, SAMBA, Rural Carrier, Aetna Advantage, APWU High, and Compass Rose High, HDHP/CDHP Plans, UnitedHealthcare Choice. Keep in mind the key consideration that generally, you must be enrolled in both Medicare Part A and Part B.

**Keep What You Have:** Fairfax County and Goodwin Living have joined forces to expand brain health resources. As part of their partnership, they have made the StrongerMemory workbooks available in seven languages: English, Spanish, Farsi, Korean, Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), and Amharic. Developed by Goodwin Living and supported by Fairfax County's Department of Family Services, the StrongerMemory program is a 30-minute daily activity plan involving reading, writing, and math exercises that stimulate the brain's prefrontal cortex. The program's free workbooks are designed to support focus, memory, and cognitive well-being for older adults and their caregivers. The StrongerMemory workbook is now available at no cost at [StrongerMemory.org](https://StrongerMemory.org).

#### **NEWSLETTER INFO**

The monthly Annandale Chapter newsletter is published September through June to provide current information of interest and to reflect some of the information shared at our in-person and Zoom meetings. Please keep us informed of any changes in email addresses. We cannot update your NARFE information, you must do that yourselves online or via a phone call to the National Office. If you wish, you may go to <https://www.narfe.org> and login to update your contact information and ensure you get all the information they provide for NARFE national business or information regarding federal benefits. Whatever you share with us (addresses, email addresses, or phone numbers) will **NOT** be shared with any other organization and will only be used for Chapter 1159 communications. Newsletters are primarily shared with Chapter members via email as a means for direct and quick delivery and to minimize mailing costs. Individuals without access to email can request a mailed, printed copy.