



National Active & Retired Federal Employees Lebanon Valley Chapter 458

Meetings 3rd Monday 1:30 pm, except February (the 4th Monday)
Lebanon Senior Center • 7th & Maple Streets, Lebanon, PA
In case of inclement weather, if the Senior Center closes, there will be no meeting.

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President's Message

This is the time of the year to start making your plans for 2020. I suggest you add to your calendar and plan to attend our NARFE meetings. Your officers work hard to make the meetings interesting and informative. I, as your chapter president, have been an officer since 2004. As a new attendee in September 2004 and "sort of" thought I'd give it a shot of being your president when no one wanted to step in for this position. I had no idea what NARFE even meant or stood for in this organization. I am glad I took the time to commit and the opportunity to learn how important it is to be a member.

This is the only organization that is continually fighting to save the benefits we worked so hard to earn and as long as it stands up and fights, I will never quit.

NARFE's 100th anniversary is coming up and we can be thankful for the few government employees who were the initial founders of NARFE. The national membership is dropping right and left and it seems that no one cares anymore. WHY? It is wrong to think this way. Who else do we have to let us know but NARFE? They have representatives constantly sitting in on the hearings at Washington and reporting to us on the outcomes. This is far worth the small dues we pay each year. Think about it – Who else do we have doing this for us? The more civil service members who choose to sit by the wayside, and not join, the less they will know.

Back in 2004 when I started coming to chapter meetings, our National membership was over 500,000 members. Today it is around 200,000 members. The main reason is the older members died and the younger have it too easy and don't think of their future. This is why we keep trying to recruit the current active employees regardless of their age. Also, there is a large number of retired government workers who don't even know about NARFE. Let's work together and get the word out to others and encourage membership.

Another item I'd like to discuss is paying membership dues. With our National NARFE reports we have access on active employee, retired, spouse membership, dues withholding, or if you pay 1, 2 or 3 years dues at a time, national only member, lifetime member or an honorary member. During the last two or three years we find several members who paid their dues late and became national only and were dropped from the chapter's membership. The best way to pay is by payroll deduction. The Lebanon chapter dues are \$40.00 for national and \$5.00 for chapter. However, it's discounted to only \$39.00 per year. Saves you postage and you never have to send in another check. The only downfall is active members cannot take advantage of this benefit.

See you at our meeting on Monday February 24, 2020 at 1:30 PM at the Lebanon Senior Center, 7th & Maple Streets, Lebanon.

Dixie Gasper, Chapter President

Upcoming Meetings

February 24, 2020 – Dr. Tracie L. Clemens, Director of Elementary Education

March 16, 2020 – Dr. Valerie Yohn, Comforting Hands Chiropractic

April 20, 2020 – Charlie Fetter, Historian of Trolley from Ephrata to Lebanon

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You

Once again we want to thank everyone who donated to the Wreaths Across America fund raising project. This project is very dear to Dixie's and my heart and we are so very proud for the 2019 contributions. 2018 was the first year Indiantown Gap's National Cemetery was fully covered. It looked like we were not gonna make it again last year, but after seeing a TV news report that the numbers were down, the contributions picked up and we were once again at full coverage.

Between our NARFE chapter and the Jonestown American Legion working together on this project we laid 304 wreaths on Friday, December 13th with 44 volunteers helping to lay. This was the most volunteers we've ever had and everyone was glad they helped and promised to help again this year. Special thanks to Tony Vanicola and his friends who always offer to take more than we ask. Every year people say they are coming to help and don't show up. I had one Legionnaire plan to help lay again, however, he passed away one week before we laid the wreaths. A special THANKS to the following: the

Musselwhites, Barlets, Woods, Stewards, Boyers, Potashes, Ruth Rudy, Jo Beth Rhen, Shirley Behney and Andrea Swope for their continued help.

Dixie and I could not do this alone. On Saturday, December 14th, it rained all morning and we were actually soaked just taking the wreaths out of the cartons prior to the actual wreath laying. They even shortened the ceremony as the rain came down heavier and heavier. Lots of people came to Section 9A to help us lay as we were close to the administration building. We were very well organized and here too, we want to thank George Potash and his family for sticking it out with us.

Having said all this, we want you to know that we accept money all year long.

Whatever does not get remitted by our cut off date, Wreaths Across America gives us credit for the following year. It also makes it easier on both Dixie and me so that we are not mailing off money every day the last two weeks. We don't mind using our own postage, but like everyone else's life, that time of the year is busy for everyone. I'd wait for several days

for the mail to come in, then do my tally report which includes the name of the person purchasing the wreaths, their mailing address, e-mail address if they list it, the number of wreaths being purchased and, if paying by check, I record the check number. Then I would get in my car and drive 10 miles to the Post Office to make sure my letter would reach Maine by the 1st of December. I'm not complaining one bit and neither does Dixie. It's a love we have for this worthwhile cause. At the National Cemetery there are anywhere from 6 to 10 burials a day, 6 days a week, which means every year we need that many more wreaths to cover every site. So from the bottom of Dixie's and my heart, we say THANK YOU.

Doris Edris, Secretary/Treasurer



NAMES, ADDRESSES, PHONE NUMBERS & E-MAILS

The computer at our national headquarters has been replaced. BOY – what a mess. They are working hard to make the system easier to use and provide up-to-date info. Today I've been sitting at my computer trying to match our mailing list with their latest. Some of our members were dropped from chapter status to national only status, the addresses I use for these newsletters don't match up, and matching to phone number and e-mail address you provided were not all up to date.

Membership is very important and we'd like you to be current with both the NARFE magazine and our newsletters.

A way to change your information is to contact one of your chapter officers or come to the meeting and provide the changes. You can also call 431-838-7760 Ext 431. This is the Member Records Help Line.

The reason I'm writing this article is because the past few newsletters we prepared and mailed, 10 or more each time have been returned as unable to deliver. Now think of this – postage is paid when it is mailed and postage is paid by us to get it back. If I have good phone numbers or e-mail addresses, I will try to contact you to make sure you did not move or drop out of NARFE.

Dixie Gasper, Chapter President

POSSIBLE MERGER OF OPM & GSA

Signs indicate the Trump administration is still pursuing the merger of the Office of Personnel Management with the General Services Administration, despite recent congressional language prohibiting the transfer of OPM statutory functions to other agencies. The Federal News Network has learned the president's 2021 budget request was to be released.

The White House previously issued a joint budget request for the two agencies in the president's 2020 proposal. The administration first rolled up OPM justification's inside the GSA request last year, a move that, in part represented the administration's intention to merge the two agencies and begin a more concerted appeal to Congress to give them the statutory authorities needed to execute the transfer. NARFE Headquarters will be watching this very closely and keep us informed.

John Bordlemay

Wreaths Across America – December 11/12, 2020

Lebanon Valley NARFE chapter had another successful year participating in the Wreaths Across America fundraiser. It's never too early to start selling for the year 2020. December will be here before we know it. Time just goes so fast.

Last year our chapter and its members sold 265 wreaths to be placed on over 53,000 graves at the national cemetery at Fort Indiantown Gap. Thanks to everyone who helped. the Friday before the main placement of the wreaths. This group of volunteers from our chapter and members of the American Legion of Jonestown came out at 9:00 am and laid wreaths on special request for a loved one. Wow – For the first time, every grave was covered. What a site to see!

Doris Edris, our Secretary/Treasurer, is the major coordinator for both our chapter and the American Legion. This is why we do it jointly. Both our organizations sell their wreaths and

help place each others both Friday and Saturday. Lots of work and a *“Big Thank You To Doris.”*

What a memory for everyone who helps. It's a wonderful feeling to be able to help and cherish all military members who served so we can have the freedom our county enjoys today.

Keep in mind, there are 6 to 10 burials a day, 6 days a week, so we need to work even harder to cover the entire cemetery again in 2020.

*Dixie Gasper,
Wreath Chairperson*



Our Lebanon NARFE Chapter is selling wreaths again for 2020 to be placed on the Fort Indiantown Gap National Cemetery. The orders should be mailed no later than November 24, 2020, so we have time for them to be made and shipped. We will place special order wreaths on graves Friday, December 11, 2020. Saturday, December 12, 2020, is the day all the others will be placed after the ceremony.

If you have a loved one buried in this cemetery and you would like to lay it yourself and maybe a few others, let us know ahead of time. If you would like to just help, we would appreciate your assistance. It may be snowy and cold, but it is so rewarding to be part of placing these wreaths on the graves of our men and women who gave so much for us to have our freedom. Contact Dixie Gasper 717-866-9237 (dixieg38comcast.net) or Doris Edris 717-865-9779 (de17038@yahoo.com)

Make checks **payable to: WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA** and mail to Dixie Gasper, 1300 E. Kercher Ave., Lot #80, Myerstown, PA 17067 **OR** Doris Edris, 58 Whitetail Lane, Jonestown, PA 17038.

Deadline is November 24, 2020. Any questions call 717-866-9237 or e-mail dixieg38@comcast.net

I wish to purchase _____ wreath(s) @ \$15.00 each in Memory or in Honor of a veteran who has served their country.

Veteran _____ Grave Site at IGMR _____
(Branch, Rank & Name)

In Memory of a Veteran _____
(Branch, Rank & Name)

Name _____ Phone _____

Region II Training Academy and PA General Meeting – June 1-2, 2020

Please reserve these dates to attend the great Training Academy. The Training Academy and PA State General meeting will take place at the Wyndham Garden Hotel in York, PA.

Registration begins at 9:30 on June 1, 2020. A buffet luncheon will begin at noon, followed by speakers from our NARFE Headquarters who will speak on benefits and advocacy. It looks like our NARFE President Ken Thomas is to be our speaker and our Executive Director Barbara Side. Please have many questions ready for them.

After listening to our speakers, there will be an hour of “meet and greet” followed by a delicious Tuscan Buffet. Entertainment will follow. Tuesday morning enjoy a Grand Buffet Breakfast, followed by many round table discussions such as: service officer, president, treasurer, and membership and a few others. This is a good way for you to learn and appreciate what your officers are doing to make NARFE a good organization to join and become active.

If you are interested to attending these two meetings, contact Dixie Gasper, 717-866-9237 or e-mail dgasper38@comcast.net OR COME TO OUR FEBRUARY MEETING. Our chapter will fully support this mission. The PA federation and our chapter will cover the costs of registration and room.

*Dixie Gasper,
Chapter President*



National Active & Retired Federal Employees

Lebanon Valley NARFE 458

1300 E. Kercher Ave., Lot #80
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www.orgsites.com/pa/narfe-458

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NARFE TOLL FREE NUMBERS

(NARFE Dues pay the cost)

U.S. CAPITOL SWITCHBOARD:

866-220-0044 – Ask to be connected to your senator or representative by name.

WHITE HOUSE COMMENT LINE:

888-225-8418

NOT TOLL FREE:

U.S. CAPITOL SWITCHBOARD:

202-225-3121

NARFE POLITICAL ACTION PROGRAM

NARFE PAC is a program we do not discuss often. However, it is a headquarters program to determine which legislative members of all parties should receive funding from NARFE while being careful not to support any particular party. NARFE does want to help those party members who **support** NARFE. We try not to tie the legislative officer to the PAC duties. Their jobs are quite different, but often they work together.

Our chapter has not had a NARFE PAC for many years. Throughout the year, parties are searching for people to run for political jobs. These “politicians” meet with many of their constituents in their regions or districts (as with NARFE).

The PAC reps also collect donations from members to go into the big NARFE pot which is how donations are separated and given to specific area parties or individuals running for office. Each chapter within the specific area of the political or party which asks for donations is asked by national if that person or party supports NARFE. Our national PAC approves our requests or supports us when there is a move to hurt us, reduce our pay or cuts our jobs.

Maria Ritzman, Membership Chairperson