



NEWS

Pennsylvania Federation National Active and Retired Federal Employees

Nov 2020-Feb 2020

Newsletter

Editor: Joanne Dine



**President's Notes
NARFE PA
President Rich Zuck**

This is election season. We wrapped up the NARFE Election with important issues related to National Officers and Bylaws. When you receive this newsletter, the general election will be just a few short days away with candidate decisions that will have a very big impact on our country for years to come. Do not take these ballots or their results lightly--they will affect all of us. We also have FEHB Open Season just around the corner and Medicare already opened up on October 15 (these are both elections, in a way).

With both Medicare and FEHB seasons upon us this fall, we all need to be informed. Be knowledgeable about your Medicare options and your FEHB plans. Things can change from one year to the next (both with your health and individual plans), so it is definitely advisable to compare plans every year to get the coverage and protection that best suits your needs.

As a result of our NARFE Officer and Bylaws ballot this past summer, our members nationwide elected Kathryn Hensley to another term as our National Secretary/Treasurer, one of several key results. Kathryn has been a friend of the Pennsylvania Federation since the beginning of her first term and her reelection bodes well for our organization.

The Bylaws change that will have the biggest impact on our membership was the approval of a change in annual national dues, upward from \$40 to \$48 dollars a year, which passed by a 2:1 margin. This increase will take place on January 1, 2021. An \$8 a year increase can sound very alarming to seniors on a fixed income, no doubt. However, members who have enrolled in Dues Withholding (which currently lowers their Annual Dues by 15% to \$34) will only see their monthly deduction rise by 67 cents or less a month, which for most of us is a lot easier to swallow.

You can see election results for all of the NARFE ballot issues, officers and Bylaws, on the NARFE website (www.narfe.com). Also keep in mind that although some of the NARFE results might be objectionable to you, less than 6% of our NARFE members statewide voted. So, basically, those that did vote, spoke for all of us.

Next month's national election for President and Congress, as well as many statewide and local offices demands a lot of thought and questioning by all voters. Sadly, a lot of voters won't do either. Know your issues, both personal and NARFE-related, and where the candidates stand on what is most important to

you. Take the time to fact-check any OMG! Statements you hear or articles you read. Google is a great resource for this.

Put the hype and personalities aside, vote what is important to you, and then accept that you voted your conscience. Vote in person or vote by Mail, BUT VOTE!!!! Look a little further on in this newsletter for help requesting a Mail-In Ballot. It is safe, it works, and that is how I am voting this year.

And to repeat:

ANNUAL DUES WILL RISE TO \$48 A YEAR ON
1/1/2021

STAY SAFE. STAY SMART. STAY WELL.



Kathy Adams
Region II VP

Region II was distributed 29,500 of which 1,978 or 6.71% were returned. Candidates for National Office for National Office for Secretary\Treasurer:

Cindy Renee Blythe 5,038

Kathryn Hensley 7,661

Increase in National Dues: With the increase from \$40.00 to \$48.00, the last dues increase resulted in membership loss of 5% over the ensuing year. It is crucial because of the continued 10% funding to federations. All members must think of new, real retention strategies in combination with any new recruitment plans. This all takes effect in 2021.

Alzheimer's Goal for Region II have not been met, due to the fact that Chapters have not been meeting. Therefore, the deadlines have been extended for six months.

It has been a real pleasure working and meeting so many wonderful members. I hope our paths will continue to cross frequently. Stay healthy and safe!



1st VP Membership
Bill Krouse

Retaining our membership continues to be serious problem. I have been monitoring the numbers at the Federation level and yes on a daily basis we may lose one or two members. The drops on a daily basis appear to be due to deaths, and that has to be expected considering the age of many of our members. But once a month, usually about a week into the month there is a significant drop. Based on my own chapter these drops appear to be the members who are dropped due to non-payment of dues. These drops happen from the both the chapter members and the National Only members. The significant stat though is the membership drops from the chapter ranks is generally about 50 % less than the drops from the National Only ranks despite the fact that the chapter members has about 60% of the total Pennsylvania membership to 40% of National only members living in Pennsylvania. What this tells me is that our Chapter officers are doing a better job of keeping members in NARFE versus the National only members who don't have anyone to keep them active. So the chapter officers have to work to keep their members from going National Only where they may eventually drop from NARFE altogether. The following chart shows NARFE Statewide members on selected dates.

| Date | PA Chapter Members | National Only Members | Total PA Members |
|-----------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 7/2/2020 | 5564 | 3876 | 9440 |
| 7/7/2020 | 5566 | 3878 | 9444 |
| 7/8/2020 | 5536 | 3833 | 9369 |
| 8/1/2020 | 5535 | 3845 | 9380 |
| 8/5/2020 | 5531 | 3847 | 9378 |
| 8/6/2020 | 5491 | 3768 | 9259 |
| 9/1/2020 | 5457 | 3756 | 9213 |
| 9/7/2020 | 5449 | 3763 | 9212 |
| 9/8/2020 | 5405 | 3694 | 9099 |
| 10/1/2020 | 5381 | 3724 | 9105 |
| 10/6/2020 | 5374 | 3732 | 9106 |
| 10/7/2020 | 5340 | 3672 | 9012 |

I don't have the magic answer to retain members. My chapter has lost members due to death and transfer to national. The M112 report shows many of these losses but it doesn't always show all losses. Our chapter recently had a member drop off our roster. I couldn't even find her on the Federation search. I finally contacted the member. She had moved out of state two years prior and when she renewed this past month, she just signed up for National since she said she would never be attending any of our meetings. Because she was a national Only member now, but living out of state, she didn't show up in the federation search. In my opinion, she still should have appeared in the M112 report but she wasn't. Look at the M-112 report but also compare your numbers periodically and check what



Treasurer
Rich Karakantas

Treasurer’s Report

With travel, meetings and events curtailed because of the virus, activity in the Federation bank account was limited.

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Beginning Balance 6/30/20 | 29,562.83 |
| Income | <u>11,381.69</u> |
| Funds Available | 40,944.52 |
| Expenses | <u>(2,387.44)</u> |
| Ending Balance | 38,557.08 |

Reserve Account Balance 58,968.39

The Federation’s Form 990-N was filed with the IRS in October. The form is due within five and one half months after an organization’s fiscal year-end. The Federation’s fiscal year ended June 30. Most chapters are on a calendar year basis. Form 990-N for those chapters should have already been filed. Chapter officers should make sure their chapters are in compliance. Filing Form 990-N maintains a chapter’s tax-exempt status.



NARFE PAC
Brian Finn

I am the new NARFE PAC Coordinator for the state of Pennsylvania. I am a member of Chapter 372 out of Norristown, PA. For the past two years, I have been the Legislative Coordinator for this local chapter. I have met with our local House member – Madeleine Dean many times. I look forward to this new position and the challenges it presents.



**District VP 6
Bill Staarman**

FY 2020 will perhaps go down as one of the most crucial elections in recent history. Citizens of many states are already voting and if one can believe the predictions more people will vote during this general election than ever before. Each party believes that a loss will change the country's direction for generations. The Pandemic of 2020 has already had a significant impact on the lives of people around the world. Workers are finding that those who still have a job can carry on with activities while working at home and when the virus has run its course some may never return to the office.

You may have noticed your representatives and their staffs are maintaining social distancing by working at home and traveling to Capitol Hill only to vote on key legislation. Campaigns are being run virtually in many cases or limiting attendance by holding events outdoor. Meanwhile, Covid-19 seems to be on the rise and your legislators are in full campaign mode. That means, for the moment, they will not be concentrating on federal workers.

NARFE published an outstanding magazine this October. It contains a report card for every U.S. Senator and House member. It also lists critical legislation and how each member voted. Therefore, it should not be difficult to see who supports NARFE. It also contains an interview with Joe Biden. President Trump's staff decided not to participate in an interview this year.

The NARFE's October issue published a scorecard of the 116th Congress for 2019-2020 and it is sparse. General budget bills aside the Senate passed the Cares Act (H.R. 748) and little else except judicial appointments. In your conversation and/or letters to your Senator you should ask them why they have failed to act on over 400 bills referred by the House.

Senator Pat Toomey has a 30% lifetime record on supporting NARFE. Senator Casey on the other hand has a lifetime record of voting for NARFE issues 97% of the time. He needs to be thanked for his support. We cannot overlook those who recognize the work and dedication of federal workers. Senator Toomey has announced that he will not run again for the Senate nor will he run for Governor as had been anticipated.

Your House Members are running for reelection now and they are totally focused on their campaigns. Money is always in play and they never seem to stop asking for it. It is not their fault. It is the system we are forced to live with, at least for the time being. If you are approached by a candidate wanting PAC money you should refer them to our PAC Coordinator, Brian Finn. His phone number is 215-830-0276 or better yet email him at bfinn612013@gmail.com.

**PA Sixth Congressional District
DVP Report
William Staarman**

Elections are only weeks away and our incumbent Representative in working full time trying to get reelected. Her opponent is **John Emmons**, a businessman and chemical engineer, announced his intentions for the Chester and Berks County seat. In a release about his candidacy, Emmons said the upcoming election is "a

fight for the soul of our country” and is running as a “conservative leader” who is not a politician. “I have not reached out to him primarily because we have not been holding meetings. Otherwise, I would have invited him to our luncheon.

Reaching out to our legislators will be our next challenge. Other organizations are starting to hold meetings using Zoom technology. Guest speakers are patched into the zoom call, make their presentations, and leave when finished just like a regular meeting. Our Federation is already meeting regularly by Zoom. I think we just need to break the ice and experiment.

Given the restraints of the last of year we made good progress in PA 6th. In March of 2019 I met with Representative Houlahan’s staff at her office in Washington during NARFE’s Legislative Training Conference and lobbied in favor of the USPS Fairness Act which would remove the requirement to pre fund retired postal workers health premiums and the Social Security Fairness Act which would remove the formula reducing the SSA benefits of those who receive benefits for work performed in the private sector. I followed up that same year by making a personal visit to the West Chester, PA District office. I met with the office manager and provided her with copies of H.R.141 and H.R. 2382 along with NARFE’s position papers.

I attended Representative Houlahan’s “State of the District” presentation at the Colonial Theater in Phoenixville, PA. While there I gave the same documents to her Berks County staffer. I followed this up with a phone call.

On February 10th I was invited to attend a meeting in Reading with Chapter 103. The speakers were two staff members from Representative Houlahan’s Reading/Berks office. The chapter led by President Dean Whitman and Advocacy/Legislative VP Robert Sarnoski stressed the importance of this legislation to NARFE. Shortly thereafter, I learned that Representative Houlahan had signed as co-sponsor to both bills. When I called to thank the Reading office, I was told that the meeting helped in the decision to sign as co-sponsor of the SSA Fairness Act.

I attended three town hall meetings, two in Coatesville, PA and one in Phoenixville, PA. I listened in on three phone town hall meetings.



**District VP 10
Bill Krouse**

After I became the District VP for Congressional District 10, I reached out to the major congressional candidates requesting a COVID-19 appropriate meeting to introduce myself and learn of the candidate’s views on NARFE issues. Only Eugene DePasquale responded. I provided background material on NARFE issues and we set up a quick Zoom meeting among DePasquale, one of his aides, and myself. He supports the NARFE position on all major issues. Following our meeting DePasquale completed the NARFE-PAC questionnaire. NARFE-PAC subsequently contributed \$5,000 to DePasquale’s campaign.

Three of the four chapters in CD10 are at least having Executive meetings in the past couple of months and West Shore and Mechanicsburg are using the PA NARFE zoom account to hold their Health Fair presentations this fall. Both chapters are having drive-by/pickups to hand out health fair materials.

Message for DVP 16 (Acting) William Krouse

Both New Castle Area 0657 and Presque Isle Erie 0143, the only two chapters in the 16th Congressional District, remain strong and viable without actually having physical membership meetings. Erie almost pulled off their first membership meeting since February this month, but then the host restaurant said that they weren't able to staff the dining area during the appointed time. The annual Christmas get-together looks like the first chance to meet up again



**Alzheimer's Chair
Dixie Gasper**

Alzheimer's Report

The PA Federation did reach our 2019-20 goal by going over \$10,000. This year we are having a slow start without chapters having their meetings and the worry what's happening to our economic system. As most of us, we have been staying at home with limited outside activities and seem to be holding onto our money for the "just in case" situation. When your DVP's come to visit your chapter, please tell them what you are doing as a fundraiser for this cause. Remember, you *cannot* use the money your chapter gets from National headquarters for any fund raiser.

I am asking each of our chapters to write an article for your newsletter and encourage members to help find a cure for this terrible disease. As you can see from my report, six NARFE members have donated a personal check and mailed it through their Alzheimer chairperson and they forward it to me for submission to the Alzheimer Association. By doing it in this order you, your chapter and the PA federation all get credit.

My grandfather and father both suffered and these words just touched my heart and I'd like to share what a NARFE member wrote with their check.

"My wife's father, a man I was so fortunate to meet in 1993 when he still had full control of his faculties. He was a loving father, husband, grandfather, great grandfather, uncle, brother and so much more. His legacy will live on in his children and grandchildren and great grandchildren. We all mourn his loss to the scourge of Alzheimer's and hope that this donation can help ease the pain of so many others."

As your Federation's Alzheimer's chair-person I will gladly help you. Just give me a call or e-mail. Our goal again this campaign is OVER \$10,000. You or I may someday be helped and glad we donated to find a cure. All checks get made payable to "NARFE Alzheimer's Research". 717-866-9237 or dgasper38@comcast.net.

AS OF 10/16/20

PA Fed Alzheimer's Report

| <u>District</u> | <u>Cpt #</u> | <u>Chapter Name</u> | <u>\$ Amount</u> | <u>Chapter or Personal</u> |
|-----------------|--------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| District #3 | 31 | Philadelphia Center City | \$50.00 | 1 Personal |
| District #9 | 458 | Lebanon Valley | \$100.00 | 1 Personal |
| District #10 | 1816 | Mechanicsburg | \$100.00 | 1 Personal |
| District #11 | 331 | York | \$280.00 | 1 Chapter/2 Personal |
| District #16 | 143 | Presque Isle | \$525.00 | 2 Personal |
| | 657 | New Castle | \$300.00 | 1 Personal (Direct) |
| TOTAL | | | \$1,355.00 | |
| | 1 | Chapter Checks = | \$130.00 | |
| | 8 | Personal Donations = | \$1,225.00 | |
| | 6 | Chapter's Participated in Donating | | |



William Krouse
Webmaster

Due to taking on different NARFE positions, I am looking for my replacement as webmaster. All nominations and volunteers gratefully received. It is not difficult work. You do not need any special computer applications; all software is included when you log into the National NARFE website.

I am continuing to accept chapter newsletters to post on the website (I keep the latest copy). I will also post any other material that you think would help the members statewide.

The latest initiative as webmaster is to coordinate the use of the paid PA NARFE Zoom account. The Federation board uses the account to hold their board meetings virtually, and we have opened the use up to chapters to hold executive meetings and/or chapter meetings. seven chapters have used the account and others are considering its use. Contact me if your chapter is interested.

**Editor
Joanne Dine**

My name is Joanne Dine. My husband, Jim, is President of the NARFE York chapter #331. Jim and I joined NARFE about ten years ago following Jim's retirement from the US Geological Survey. I also was employed with the Survey for about six years. For the York chapter I am program chair-person and newsletter editor.

In 1979 we made the move from Illinois to Glen Rock, PA, a small town in southern York County. Through the years I have served various terms on the Borough's Water and Sewer Board, Planning Commission, and have been an election official for over thirty years.



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Pennsylvania Federation BY Congressional Districts (CD)

| Congressional District | Chapters | District Vice President |
|------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1 | Doylestown (740), Lower Bucks (1287) | Tom Cline |
| 2 | Oxford Circle (1301) | |
| 3 | Philadelphia Center Square (664) | Ted Hall |
| 4 | Norristown (372), Montgomery County (1384) | Marion Pugh |
| 5 | Delaware County (404), Media) 1940 | Tom Geronikos |
| 6 | Reading (103), Chester County (377) | William Staarman |
| 7 | Easton Area (1102), Lehigh Valley (1371) | Ruth Cline |
| 8 | Scranton (129), Wilkes Barre (342), Pocono (1189), Greater Pittston Area (1723), Pike-Wayne County (2259) | John Shutack |
| 9 | Schuylkill (413), Lebanon Valley (458) | |

| | | |
|----|---|--------------------------|
| 10 | Harrisburg (102), Carlisle (373), West Shore (1465), Mechanicsburg (1816) | Bill Krouse |
| 11 | Lancaster (301), York (331) | |
| 12 | Williamsport (412), Susquehanna Valley (1646) | William McGinley |
| 13 | Altoona (328), Chambersburg (1063), Adams Hanover (1797), Somerset (1861), Bedford (2093) | |
| 14 | Allegheny Kiski (1556), Fayco (2002) | |
| 15 | Johnstown (1130), Kinzua Area (1778), McKean County Area (1782), Indiana Area (2124) | Larry Palecek |
| 16 | Presque Isle (143), New Castle Area (657) | Richard Zuck (acting) |
| 17 | Pittsburg Metra (114), Mon Yough (1855) | Jerome Funderwhite |