



# NEWS

**Pennsylvania Federation National Active and Retired Federal Employees**

**February-April 2021**

**Newsletter**

**Editor: Joanne Dine**



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

We remain mired neck deep in the COVID-19 quagmire and the rescue rope that will hopefully help pull us out is still a few months away. Our Chapters, our members, our families have been impacted by the virus and we need to stay vigilant in our efforts to protect not only ourselves, but all those we call family and love so dearly.

Most Chapters are still not holding in-person membership meetings, while some do use ZOOM to gather together. New member recruitment has been reduced to a trickle. Chapter visits by our District Vice Presidents have become phone calls or emails, without any face-to-face conversations. Some of our members have been fortunate enough to get in on some of the first vaccination programs, but most of us can only sit on the sidelines hoping spots on the waiting lists open up soon. Some of our members have earned immunity by contracting and surviving the virus, some have contracted the virus and succumbed to it.

What can we do as NARFE officers and members then?

As a Chapter Officer, have you accessed the AMS to look at the Chapter Reports that are available for you? The M-112 details Chapter Activity by a variety of categories, including New Prospective Members. There were a total of 45 New Prospective Members (with home addresses and even email addresses for some) spread across 25 Chapters for the time period of December 1, 2020 through January 24, 2021. Does your Chapters have any prospects listed there? There are other categories there that can help you serve your members, like

**President Rich Zuck continued**

New Members, Members Dropped for Non-Renewal, Renewals, Reinstatements, and a few more. Go to the AMS at [members.narfe.org](http://members.narfe.org) to sign in (if you need help signing in, you can ask right there on that page), or contact your DVP for help, or email me at [rzuck@neo.rr.com](mailto:rzuck@neo.rr.com).

As a Chapter member, how often do you bring NARFE into your conversations with friends and former coworkers? When conversations touch to what is happening in Washington DC, have you mentioned that NARFE is working to keep our Federal employees more secure and fairly treated in their workplace? President Biden signed an Executive Order (one of many) to **rescind** an order that created a new Schedule F for some Federal employees. This was an order from the previous administration that was taking us back decades to a time when someone's political views and activities could get them a good paying job in government or could get them fired, without regard to their qualifications or abilities.

Have you volunteered your time or talent to your Chapter to help ease the burden the officers bear? Even in times of virtual meeting or no meetings at all, isolation, quarantine, and social distance, there are things you can do that will have a positive impact on your Chapter. You can help contact members whose memberships are about to expire just to remind them to renew soon. You can gather a few friends to perhaps do your own walk or activity to raise money for Alzheimer's. Your Chapter officers can assist you in these endeavors--just reach out to let them know that you are motivated and available.

NARFE offers us so much, but we can also offer NARFE a lot as well. Our NARFE Magazine has a wealth of information important not only to our retired members, but also for active federal employees. Member services offer free, expert advice on a myriad of benefit topics, just by calling 800-456-8410, Option 2. I know there was a lot of discontent with the increase in Dues at the first of this year, but a lot of members were able to renew at the old rates to save money. Renewing with a Two- or Three-Year membership also saved members money. Dues Withholding for those retired members who receive a Government Annuity also saves members money.

Be proud of your NARFE organization and your NARFE membership. Remind your friends about what **WE, you and I**, do for all active and retired Federal employees. We are just a few short months away from our 100th Anniversary, and we can all help to take NARFE into our second 100 years as a strong and vibrant organization.

**PLEASE STAY SAFE. MASK. DISTANCE. STAY HEALTHY**



## **Immediate Past Pres Larry Palecek**

We are well into the new year and some things have changed for the better. The best is we have a COVID vaccine to get out to everyone. We have a new US President that we wish the best of success. NARFE has a new web page that I feel presents NARFE in a better light and our online NARFE tools in the AMS have greatly improved. I urge all our PA Chapter officers to log onto the AMS and start using the membership information we have available.

**Why are we in NARFE?** Why do we keep paying? Over the years we have felt very secure in our retirement and benefits, not so much lately. NARFE celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2021. NARFE has done much since 1921 to secure fair annuities for all federal retirees, survivor benefits for spouses, fought for reform and adjustment to the COLA program and removed COLA as a bargaining chip from Congress. There are too many NARFE actions to list but below are some of the current achievements:

**NARFE defeated proposed cuts** to the earned retirement and health benefits of current federal retirees, despite substantial threats in recent years.

**NARFE pushed Congress** to suspend required minimum distributions from retirement accounts amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

**NARFE championed** the much needed and long overdue TSP Modernization Act which gives you more flexible withdrawal options and more control over your retirement savings.

Working closely with congressional allies, **NARFE prevented a pay freeze in 2019** and **secured a larger market-based pay increase in 2020**, the largest in a decade.

**IPP Larry Palecek continued**

**Good News: The biggest threat to the federal employee has been reversed. From NARFE HQ:** “On January 22, President Joe Biden rescinded the previous administration’s Schedule F executive order, which created a new federal employment category that threatened to politicize federal jobs and the delivery of services that the American people rely on. NARFE [strongly supports](#) the move to rescind the order.

Had the order been fully implemented, it would have converted tens, or even hundreds, of thousands of policy-making federal jobs into the new Schedule F classification within the excepted service. The new schedule would have exempted reclassified employees from civil service rules and due process rights that ensure federal employees are hired and fired based on merit, not their political connections or lack thereof, jeopardizing the very foundation of our federal government.”

So, is it worth belonging to NARFE? I believe it is. Please keep your membership current we need you.

The pandemic has erased so much of 2020 for us and I am unsure how we arrived in 2021 so quickly. Stay safe and healthy and as the vaccines get going, we will all be face-to face again.



**Region II VP  
Dr. Gary Roundtree, Sr**

Our Region II Training Symposium that was scheduled, to take place at the Wyndham Hotel in York, PA on March 14-16, 2021 has been postponed and rescheduled because of COVID-19. The new date for the Region II Training will be March 14-16, 2022 at the location and hotel as before. January 1, 2021 was my first day in office as RVP II for PA, NJ, DE, D.C., and MD Federations. The NEB held two Executive Board Meeting on January 14 and 22, 2021.

The meeting on January 14<sup>th</sup> was called a special session, open to members as guests to observe. NEB Board Meeting, held on December 15, 2020 had at least

**REG II VP Dr. Gary Roundtree, Sr, Continued**

one hour of executive session and January 14, 2021, where the discussions and votes on this issue by the board took place. As a member of the NEB, I have been reclassified three different times in three weeks. I first was an exempt employee, then a nonexempt employee part time and now supposedly classified as an independent contractor by the National President against the NEB Board decision. This issue will probably open up pandora box that NARFE might not be able to recover from.

The Centennial 100 years Gala and LEGcon21, that is scheduled to take place in June 2021, still has not been cancelled yet or decided to take place. As soon as I get word from NARFE HQ, I will notify all of Region II President's. The January 22<sup>nd</sup> NEB meeting that took place by zoom was all about the 2021 budget and was adopted. I plan to bring physical responsibility and not spending more than the revenue coming in and reducing defects and waste in our processes that makes NARFE more productive and efficient to bring about customers and members satisfaction. Also, on January 22<sup>nd</sup> NEB meeting I was elected by the board to serve on the Audit committee, which is a three-member committee of RVP's and one as Chairman.

The following staff personnel are no longer with NARFE – Yonathan Neblyat, Staff Accountant; Dan Hidayat, Director Information Technology; and Shela'e Herman, Manager, Human Resources.

The Governor of Virginia Northam has extended the modified stay at home order through February 28, 2021. This means that NARFE stay at home and telework will probably remain in place a little while longer.

There are two future scheduled NEB meetings on the calendar for February 12 and February 26, 2021. I have already attended by zoom for Region II these Federations board meetings in January with Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland.

**Up Coming Federation Events**

Deadline for next newsletter	April 15, 2021	
PA General Membership Mtg.	<del>March 15-16 2021</del> <b>Cancelled</b>	Wyndham Garden Hotel, York PA
Region II Training Academy	<del>March 14-16, 2021</del> <b>Postponed</b>	Wyndham Garden Hotel, York PA



## **1<sup>st</sup> VP Membership Bill Krouse**

Retaining our membership continues to be serious problem. In the last newsletter I had some stats that showed around the 7<sup>th</sup> of the month, give or take a day or so, there is generally a big drop in membership. It appears this drop is due to finally purging the members who did not renew their membership. The interesting part of this, though, is the drop is much greater in the National Only members versus the chapter members. To me, two points stick out. First our chapter membership chairs are doing something right by following up on members who let their membership lapse. The second point is we have to make our chapter relevant to our members and keep them in our chapters. What do the chapters offer our members? Yes, there is the social aspect of meeting over lunch but in most chapters only a small percentage of members go to the meetings. Do you provide a newsletter to the members? What else do you want chapters to provide?

One way the Membership Chair can help to stem the loss of members is to encourage members to enroll in Dues Withholding. Renewal notices get lost. With Dues withholding, the member never has to renew again. There is a Dues Withholding form in every issue of the NARFE magazine. Don't forget the PA federation pays \$10.00 for every member you recruit.

I have included a chart on the next page on how each chapter has done in the past six months in retaining their members. Please note these numbers were derived from downloading the membership rosters and totaling the information.

Elsewhere in this newsletter is an article from the webmaster. In that article I provide some hints on updating Chapter Officers in the AMS system (old F7 function). Please read if you are having problems updating the officers. One other comment on assigning officers. Make sure at least one officer with an email address has Update Officer capability. The officers with this ability are the President, 1<sup>st</sup> VP, Membership chair, Secretary and Secretary/Treasurer. Yes, you can call or email the NARFE HQ Chapter Services, [fedchapservices@narfe.org](mailto:fedchapservices@narfe.org) 703-838-7760, ext. 273 but it is quicker to do it on-line.

Ch #	Chapter Name	Chapter Members Jul20/ Dec20	National Jul20/ Dec20	Ch #	Chapter Name	Chapter Members Jul20/ Dec20	National Only Jul20/ Dec20
	National Only	3875/3637	-238	1130	Johnstown	110/104	-6
102	Harrisburg	144/135	-9	1189	Pocono	35/33	-2
103	Reading	94/89	-5	1287	Lower Bucks - Levittown	103/98	-5
114	Pittsburgh Metro	299/280	-19	1296	Butler Area	60/0	-60
129	Scranton	57/55	-2	1301	Oxford Circle Phila.	250/228	-22
143	Presque Isle - Erie	107/107	0	1371	Lehigh Valley	190/179	-11
301	Lancaster	132/120	-12	1384	Montgomery County	254/238	-16
328	Altoona	63/61	-2	1465	West Shore (Hbg) Camp Hill	241/216	-25
331	York	104/103	-1	1556	Allegheny-Kiski Area	60/55	-5
342	Wilkes-Barre	82/77	-5	1646	Susquehanna Valley	34/34	0
372	Norristown	145/137	-8	1723	Greater Pittston	77/74	-3
373	Carlisle	190/183	-7	1778	Kinzua-Warren	21/0	-21
377	Chester County	159/154	-5	1782	McKean County-Bradford	52/62	-10
404	Delaware County	148/141	-7	1797	Adams-Hanover Area	103/98	-5
412	Williamsport	57/55	-2	1816	Mechanicsburg	288/285	-3
413	Schuylkill	72/67	-5	1855	Mon-Yough White Oak	91/87	-4
458	Lebanon Valley	258/250	-8	1861	Somerset	19/18	-1
657	New Castle Area	106/126	20	1940	Media	69/57	-12
664	Phila. Center Square	314/288	-26	2002	Fayco	31/31	0
740	Doylestown	102/92	-10	2093	Bedford County	31/30	-1
1063	Chambersburg	710/673	-37	2124	Indiana	57/50	-7
1102	Easton	49/44	-5	2259	Pike-Wayne County	27/27	0



## **2<sup>nd</sup> VP Legislative Bill Staarman**

It is hard to believe that the pandemic has been swirling around us for almost a year now. Will things every get back to normal as we knew it. The election campaigns for both local and national legislators have dominated our lives throughout 2020. As we embark on 2021, we still cannot turn on the TV or pick up a newspaper without wondering what shoe will drop next. Now that the elections are over things still seem as tribal as ever.

Remember 2008 when the country was experiencing the greatest recession since the Depression of 1929. Now 12 years later we are facing another financial crisis in addition to a worldwide pandemic. During this time, I can only recall two major pieces of legislation making its way through the Senate, the Affordable Care Act and The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. We've all lost count but at one time over 400 bills went to die in the Senate. Perhaps many of them issues that NARFE could have or would have supported.

They say change is good. Let us hope, because we all need to try to get back together and learn to compromise. It is important for legislators to start legislating. If they do, perhaps I will have something to write about in 2021.

### **Phil Goldstein on the United States Postal Service:**

Phil Goldstein reported on his efforts to reach out to our two Senators in support of the U.S. Postal Service. Because of COVID-19 restrictions he corresponded by letter. Senator Casey responded by praising workers forced to carry on despite the pandemic and the loss employees who contracted the virus. He also pointed out other obstacles such as the removal of critical machinery and reduction of additional work hours to deal with the rush of voting ballots. He promised his full support in protecting workers and favors H.R. 6800 which among other things removes borrowing restrictions on the USPS.

Senator Toomey addressed the concerns by discussing the failure of the USPS to make payments on the 50 billion in premiums of its retiree's health benefits. He prefers borrowing money to sustain operations rather than taxpayers giving USPS 25 billion included in one of the House bills. He recognized the effects of the COVID-19 on employees causing shortages but does not feel that any cost saving initiatives would have any effect on handling election mail.

Currently, the USPS is struggling to keep up. Many people across the country are still waiting for packages from the Holiday Season.





**Treasurer  
Rich Karakantas**

Beginning Balance 6/30/20	29,562.83
Income	<u>20,094.36</u>
Funds Available	49,657.19
Expenses	<u>(2,682.26)</u>
Ending Balance 12/31/20	46,974.93

Reserve Account Balance 58,992.75

**Filing Form 990-N** December 31, 2020 marked the end of the financial year for most chapters. To maintain their tax exempt status, those chapters should file Form 990-N with the IRS. The Form is due by May 15, 2021. If you need help with the filing, call me at 215-699-8399. When you complete the filing send or email me a copy of the confirmation page for my records. My email is [rkirsman@msn.com](mailto:rkirsman@msn.com)



**NARFE PAC  
Brian Finn**

NARFE-PAC protects NARFE members' pay and benefits by raising and spending money to elect members of Congress who support the federal community. PA has been very active in this regard.

NARFE-PAC raised and disbursed funds to many candidates during 2020 to help out with the National election held on November 4, 2020.

Nine successful PA Congressional candidates received NARFE-PAC money from Headquarters for the recent election. The candidates include; Brian Fitzpatrick, Madeleine Dean, Connor Lamb, Susan Wild, Brendan Boyle, Chrissy Houlahan, Matt Cartwright, Glenn Thompson and Michael Doyle. All were running for reelection and will be serving another term. They received disbursements after it was determined that they agree with NARFE positions on key legislative issues.

One other candidate – Eugene DePasquale – also received funds from NARFE-PAC. However, he was unsuccessful in his bid. He lost a close race to Republican Scott Perry.

Overall, 2020 was a very good year for NARFE candidates in PA.



## **Webmaster Bill Krouse**

The biggest webmaster news isn't on the PA Federation website. NARFE has redesigned their website. It has a different look; it appears a lot cleaner. It has much of the same information. The changes are ongoing. Some features are now working when they weren't the first time I logged on. In my opinion, it still could be improved. And the related AMS data base still has its problems. See <https://new.narfe.org/>

One other web related reminder. This is for Presidents, 1<sup>st</sup> VPs, Membership Chairs and Secretaries (ie those who have the authority to update officers). Each chapter is required to update their officer list each year. It is not difficult to do on-line on the NARFE HQ database through the officer portal. But two cautionary hints. If you are changing officers, be sure to add the new officer before deleting the current officer. Once you delete the yourself, you would not have the authority to add any new officers. The second hint is after you click on the blue oval "Add Chapter Officer" only enter a name **OR** ID (not both) in the search feature in Step 1. If you enter both, the system does nothing. If you click one or the other it will let you proceed. Also, once you update the list, please send the list of officers to both your District VP and the Federation Secretary, Ginny Giordano.

I am still looking for a 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 post 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. It is a way to keep your members connected. Contact me if your chapter is interested. ([billkrouse38@gmail.com](mailto:billkrouse38@gmail.com) or 717-774-4031)



## Alzheimers Chair Dixie Gasper

It's been one long year without having chapter meetings and all we can hope is this ugly virus starts to give us some relief. As I have heard, most chapters put meetings on hold or tried to do them visual on the computer. We did not try this method since most of the people who comes to our meetings don't have the means to do it this way. However, several chapters have contributed to the Alzheimer's donations to help find a cure.

I'd like to say "THANK YOU" to the ten chapters who still found a way to get collections. I recently had a one-on-one phone conversation with three chapter's Alzheimer's chairperson and discussed proper procedures to forward the chapter and/or personal donations.

Mentioned before in my newsletter articles, I will gladly work with you when getting an e-mail or phone call. Please e-mail me the name, phone number and e-mail address of your Alzheimer's chairperson. All chapters should have someone in this position.

PA Federation has so many more than 10 chapters, so look over your member and remember how many had to step aside from coming to meetings because of having some type of dementia. I know over the past years our chapter had at least 10 members either entered nursing home care or moved in with a family member. These people need our help and your chapter is the answer. All money collected goes strictly to finding a cure. NARFE nationally has already donated over \$13 million dollars. Hoping to hit the \$14 million mark this year,

Recently I printed off the [NARFE Alzheimer's Chapter Coordinator's Manual \(05/20\)](#). It is approximately 10 pages. Just go on the NARFE web site and pull it up. It's a great help. You could also try to call the national office and maybe they will mail you one. Don't hurt to try.

Dixie Gasper, Alzheimer's Chairperson

### PA Federation Alzheimer's Income 2020 Report From July 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020

Dist	Chap #	Chapter Name	Total	Contribution
3	664	Philadelphia Center Square	380.00	8 Personal
7	1102	Easton Area	40.00	1 Chapter
9	458	Lebanon Valley	684.00	1 Chapter, 3 Personal
10	1816	Mechanicsburg	100.00	1 Personal
11	301	Lancaster	200.00	1 Chapter
11	331	York	350.00	1 Chapter, 4 Personal
13	1063	Chambersburg	1000.00	1 Chapter
16	143	Presque Isle	650.00	1 Chapter, 5 Personal
16	657	New Castle	425.00	1 Chapter, 1 Personal, 1 Direct
18	114	Pittsburg Metro	550.00	1 Chapter
	10 Chapters	<b>Total</b>	<b>4379.00</b>	Chapter (2479.00), Personal (1900.00)



## **District DVP 4 Marion Pugh**

1. I requested the Vice President of the IRS 25-Year Club to distribute an email I prepared. Employees and retirees could join NARFE, renew membership, or purchase a gift membership by December 31 at the 2020 rate. The 25-Year Club has a large membership in metropolitan Philadelphia. Other chapters may want to forward NARFE membership info to other federal employee groups at other federal agencies.
  
2. New Pennsylvania State Representatives were sworn in on Tuesday, January 5. Collaborated with the Montgomery County chapter #1384 webmaster to post contact information for the new representatives serving our members in Montgomery and Bucks counties. See <http://www.narfe.org/Chapter1384>
  
3. Collaborated with the Montgomery County chapter #1384 webmaster to post the Covid-19 Pre-Registration links to County Health offices in Montgomery and Bucks counties. Adults Age 65 and older are now assigned a higher priority to receive Vaccination. After Pre-Registration, the county resident will receive an email to schedule the appointment. Anticipate it may be 30+ days to receive the County's email response. See <http://www.narfe.org/Chapter1384>
  
4. Norristown Chapter # 372 scheduled its first Chapter Zoom meeting on Wednesday, February 3, 2021.



## District DVP 4 Marion Pugh

**COVID-19 INFORMATION** Editor NOTE: Website is being constantly updated

[www.health.pa.gov](http://www.health.pa.gov) - Vaccine Pages

1. Click on the link: PA Vaccine Provider Map
2. Find address or place (drop-down menu)
3. Enter the County
4. View the County map

— Green dots — Register or Schedule the first COVID-19 Vaccination

— Red dots — The site is not currently accepting new requests.

Editor Note (Map now has all blue dots)

Please Be Persistent: The Availability may change at any moment. Independent pharmacies and grocery stores receive small quantities of COVID-19 vaccine.

\*\*\* Have your Insurance Information ready to enter. \*\*\*

You may Register at multiple sites to be placed on the Wait List for Notification when COVID-19 vaccine becomes available.

After you receive the first Vaccination, you will receive the small white Centers for Disease Control (CDC) COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card showing the Vaccine Manufacturer and Lot Number. The provider will schedule the second Vaccination appointment with you.

Note: The pharmacist may be willing to enter the COVID-19 Vaccinations in your yellow International Certificates of Vaccination document. Take it to both appointments and request the Entries.



**District DVP 6**  
**Bill Staarman**

Chapters in the 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, Chapter 103, Reading, and Chapter 307 Chester county have not been holding meetings because of COVID-19. My last visit to Chapter 103 in Reading was 1/13/2020 when Representative Houlahan sent two of her staff to the meeting. Chapter 307 Chester County held its last meeting on 02/18/2020 when we celebrated Black History month. Since then, Chester County has released two newsletters and is working on conducting a Zoom meeting. A survey is going out to determine if enough people are interested in trying to meet via the internet. One technical issue remains unresolved, that being, whether NES can be used to transmit the link to members who want to join.

I have participated in two recent meetings with Representative Houlahan, a phone Town Hall and a Zoom conference. Representative Houlahan has been consistent in her efforts to keep the constituency informed of the issues. In her most recent meeting, she described where she was and what was happening during the attack on the Capitol. Subsequently, she held a meeting to inform constituents how she would vote on the impeachment of the President. Both Democrats and Republicans are attending these sessions. I have lost count of the number of Town Hall meeting she has held but I think one of the reasons she has been successful is that she maintains an open line of communication with the people in her District.



**District DVP 10**  
**Bill Krouse**

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 regular chapter meetings with speakers. I know my chapter had to reach out to different speakers because some of our regular speakers do not do zoom. There are speakers that will do zoom, though and now my chapter has speakers scheduled monthly through May.

## PA Federation Elected and Appointed Officers

President	1 <sup>st</sup> VP/Membership	2 <sup>nd</sup> VP/Legislative
<b>Richard Zuck</b> 10066 Martin Avenue Lake City, PA 16423-1529 814-774-4129 (H) 814-323-0037 (M) <a href="mailto:rzuck@neo.rr.com">rzuck@neo.rr.com</a>	<b>Bill Krouse</b> 106 Bunker Hill Rd New Cumberland, PA 17070-2533 717-774-4031(H), 717-448-1968 (M) <a href="mailto:Billkrouse38@gmail.com">Billkrouse38@gmail.com</a>	<b>William Staarman</b> 307 Benning Lane Downingtown, PA 19335-1745 610-269-4866 <a href="mailto:wjstaarman@outlook.com">wjstaarman@outlook.com</a>
Secretary	Treasurer	IPP & VP-15
<b>Virginia Giordano</b> 1324 Georgetown Circle Carlisle, PA 17013-3578 717-243-3673 <a href="mailto:giordano.jinny@comcast.net">giordano.jinny@comcast.net</a>	<b>Rich Karakantas</b> 472 Primrose Dr Lansdale, PA 19446-7625 215-699-8399 <a href="mailto:rkirsman@msn.com">rkirsman@msn.com</a>	<b>Larry Palecek</b> 1893 New Germany Road Ebensburg, PA 15931-5203 814-472-9065 (H) & (M) <a href="mailto:Larrypal1130@comcast.net">Larrypal1130@comcast.net</a>
DVP-1	DVP-2,9,11,14	DVP-3
<b>Thomas Cline</b> 5180 Rt 212 Riegelsville, PA 18077-9517 484-308-1510 <a href="mailto:Clinet66@yahoo.com">Clinet66@yahoo.com</a>	Vacant	<b>Ted Hall</b> 509 Woodbrook Lane Philadelphia, PA 19119-1041 215-248-1121 <a href="mailto:PhillyFed@gmail.com">PhillyFed@gmail.com</a>
DVP-4	DVP-5	DVP-6
<b>Marion Pugh</b> 118 Overlook Ave Willow Grove, PA 19090-2724 <a href="mailto:Shippreked@gmail.com">Shippreked@gmail.com</a>	<b>Thomas Geronikos</b> 115 Walter Drive Media, PA 19063-5031 610-291-5039 <a href="mailto:protostsolias@yahoo.com">protostsolias@yahoo.com</a>	<b>William Staarman</b> 307 Benning Lane Downingtown, PA 19335-1745 610-269-4866 <a href="mailto:wjstaarman@outlook.com">wjstaarman@outlook.com</a>
DVP-7	DVP-8	DVP-10 & Webmaster
<b>Ruth Cline</b> 302 Saucon View Drive Bethlehem, PA 18015-5081 484-560-0411 <a href="mailto:Cliner35@yahoo.com">Cliner35@yahoo.com</a>	<b>John Shutack</b> 421 Larchmont Way Mountaintop, PA 18707-2050 570-855-5061 <a href="mailto:jbshutack@gmail.com">jbshutack@gmail.com</a>	<b>Bill Krouse</b> 106 Bunker Hill Rd New Cumberland, PA 17070-2533 717-774-4031(H), 717-448-1968 (M) <a href="mailto:BillKrouse38@gmail.com">BillKrouse38@gmail.com</a>
DVP-12	DVP-13	DVP-16
<b>William McGinley</b> 614 Pisgah Road Shermansdale, PA 17090-8856 717-329-0019 <a href="mailto:wildbillrfd@comcast.net">wildbillrfd@comcast.net</a>	<b>Raymond Hain</b> 10 Circle Drive Carlisle, PA 17015-8895 717-249-3906 <a href="mailto:Hain81914@aol.com">Hain81914@aol.com</a>	<b>Richard Zuck (Acting)</b> 10066 Martin Avenue Lake City, PA 16423-1529 814-774-4129 (H) 814-323-0037 (M) <a href="mailto:rzuck@neo.rr.com">rzuck@neo.rr.com</a>
DVP-17, 18	Region II CAB & PR	Alzheimer's Chair
<b>Jerome Funderwhite</b> 216 Karen Drive Pittsburgh, PA 15209-2414 412-821-8175 <a href="mailto:Jerry2632@aol.com">Jerry2632@aol.com</a>	<b>George Shal</b> 1410 Cortez Road Blue Bell, PA 19422-3670 610-272-0518 <a href="mailto:geoshal@gmail.com">geoshal@gmail.com</a>	<b>Dixie Gasper</b> 1300 East Kercher Avenue, Lot 80 Myerstown, PA 17067-2907 717-866-9237 <a href="mailto:DGasper38@comcast.net">DGasper38@comcast.net</a>
Editor	NARFE-PAC	Region 2 VP
<b>Joanne Dine</b> 4 Argyle Ave Glen Rock, PA 17327-1308 717-235-6129 <a href="mailto:Joanne19651@aol.com">Joanne19651@aol.com</a>	<b>Rich Karakantas</b> 472 Primrose Drive Lansdale, PA 19446-7625 215-699-8399 <a href="mailto:rkirsman@msn.com">rkirsman@msn.com</a>	<b>Dr. Gary Roundtree</b> 2002 Englewood Ave. Gwynn Oak, MD 21207-5201 410-277-8570 (H), 443-929-7045 (M) <a href="mailto:groundtreesr@hotmail.com">groundtreesr@hotmail.com</a>



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