



NEWS

Pennsylvania Federation National Active and Retired Federal Employees

Aug. 2021 to Oct. 2021

Newsletter

Editor: Joanne Dine

President's Notes

Rich Zuck

Here we are just about at the midpoint of the summer of 2021 and our Federation is getting ready to dip our toes in the water to start emerging from our COVID-19 lockdowns, quarantines, isolation, restrictions, and remote meetings.

On Tuesday, September 14, 2021, we have scheduled our Federation's General Membership Meeting (GMM) at the Wyndham Garden York at 2000 Loucks Road in York PA from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM, followed by a closing luncheon for all attendees.

This meeting will be open to all NARFE members who pre-register (at no cost) for the event and will also be available virtually via ZOOM for those who prefer to not attend in-person.

Our tentative agenda includes reports from the PA Federation President Richard Zuck (that's me), PA Federation Treasurer Richard Karakantas, addresses from NARFE National President Ken Thomas and Region II VP Dr. Gary Roundtree, as well as a special Service Awards ceremony.

While this event may not be convenient to most of our Federation members, we do hope that Chapter members residing near the I-81 and I-83 corridors would show interest in attending and others would view remotely.

LEGcon21 is now history and for the Pennsylvania Federation it was a very successful venture into Advocacy with our legislators in Washington, DC. Eleven of our Federation members and

two National members spent up to six hours a day for three days in ZOOM meetings with our Advocacy staff at HQ in preparation for and then the virtual visits with our Representatives and Senators (or in most cases, their staff). We made NARFE's case for Postal Reform while protecting the FEHB Plan, WEP/GPO repeal or reform, and fair COLAs for seniors and FERS retirees*.

We all owe Bill Staarman, our Federation 2nd VP for Legislation, a big Thank You for his work coordinating our Federation's effort, not only on our Lobby Day visits with Congress, but all of the preliminary work leading up to and including our two days of preparation that took us into Lobby Day. **THANK YOU, BILL!**

* I certainly don't want to steal any of Bill Staarman's thunder, but as I write this, information is coming out updating the *projected* 2022 COLA. Estimates now range from 5.3% to 6.1% increase when it is announced in October--WOW! That could be the biggest increase in 40 years and you need to know that we talked to our legislators during LEGcon21 about our COLAs. Specifically, we emphasized that FERS annuitants will **NOT** get that full COLA, whatever it ends up being. We will all have our increase reduced by one full percentage point, as called for when FERS was set up in 1984.

It is now your turn to speak out. Without a groundswell of our members and all FERS annuitants voicing their discontent, our work on this issue as a Federation will be for naught, because constituent contact is the absolute best way to convince a legislator that something has to change.

NARFE makes it easy to voice your concern with your Congressman and Senators. Go to our Advocacy page on NARFE's website (<https://new.narfe.org/advocacy/legislative-action-center/>) and scroll down to Support the Equal COLA Act where you can send a message to Congress (and even personalize it with something like "This impacts my retirement income and every year that I lose this 1% compounds my ability to keep up with inflation.")

While you are there, look at the other issues presented-- you can just as easily stand up to be counted on these important pieces of legislation as well.

Rich Zuck, President
Pennsylvania Federation of NARFE





PA FEDERATION GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2021, 10:00 AM

(In Person and via Teleconferencing)

National Only and Chapter Affiliated Members are Both Encouraged to Attend

WYNDHAM GARDENS YORK

2000 LOUCKS ROAD, YORK, PA

Meeting Time 10:00am to 1:00pm

Luncheon Following Meeting

To register to attend in-person or by ZOOM, please Call 412-447-1659 and leave a message with your Name, Chapter, and if you plan on Attending Live or by ZOOM.

There is no registration fee.

The agenda will include:

- Federation President Richard Zuck address
- Federation Treasurer Richard Karakantas treasurer's report
- Address By NARFE National President Ken Thomas
- Address By Region II Vice President Dr. Gary Roundtree
- Honoring Deceased Members
- Member Service and Recognition Awards



Dr. Gary Roundtree

RVP 2

Greetings to the NARFE Pennsylvania Federation members, it is an honor and privilege, first to serve you, as your regional II vice president. Your interest and concerns, about your retirement and benefits are what matters the most to me, every time I take a vote on the NEB.

Your issue and concerns about the future of organization for another hundred years as the sole institution designed to protect and defend the rights and benefits of every federal civil servant up on Capitol Hill, and States legislations from legislations that harmful to your federal retirement benefits and pay is our number one prior for existing.

I want now, take the time to thank each NARFE member from the Pennsylvania Federation that responded back to me and the first Region II Strategic Membership Planning Committee 5 question survey, since out to all region II 26k membership members from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, District of Columbia, and Maryland.

When I first took office this January 1st, 2021. I asked each Region II Federation President to nominate a member from each federation to serve on a special committee, for region II task with developing a recruitment plan for the entire region. The members that serve on this committee are Joan Larkins, PA, Michael Ryan, NJ, Ann Sulkovsky, DC, ED Holland, Maryland, and special Assistant Larry Walton from Maryland. We have named the plan being develop operation recruit. Our goal is to recruit approximately 2500 to 3000 new members for region II for every chapter and national only member in region II, this September till December 2021 during NARFE HQ incentive period. This committee meets every fourth Tuesday of the month by zoom. As the regional RVP, I am the chair of this special committee.

If I may now change topic to the NEB. The Federations President and NEB Meeting, that was schedule to take Place in San Antonio, Texas in person at the Riverside Hyatt Hotel on August 9-13, 2021, was cancelled for traveling to that destination, because of the D -variant COVID rising cases that it was too unsafe for all of us to attend in person as a group. Change to a Zoom Meeting event for 4 days. NARFE HQ thought it was in the best interest to not expose our members to such an unsafe environment as Texas, has the second highest cases of the COVID-D -variant in the country.

These were some Item on the National Executive Board Agenda Tuesday- Morning -Joint Session Meeting with Federations President's. National President's Annual Report, National

Secretary/Treasurer Annual Report, Executive Director's Report, NEB Meeting – Ballot Process/ Timelines, Recommendation of Bylaws and Resolutions committee After Action Report, Scholarship Program

Wednesday- Agenda items – NEB Meeting, Semi Annual Report by Morgan Stanley, Mid-Year Budget. Forecast, Capital Budget, Dues Structure, Budget Finance, and Investment Committee Report, Non- Dues Revenue Committee Report, Strategic Planning Committee Report, Federation Mergers and finally Executive Session items, which I am currently not at liberty to share or discuss because of the board confidentiality clause. Please note, that I will always strive to be as transparent, and upfront as allow, without crossing the line of confidentiality as a board member with all of region II members.

Thursday- Morning Agenda items- NEB Meeting, Higher Logic, Supplement Funds Definition, Joint Federation President/NEB Meeting, CAB Presentation, Small Groups Share Their Results Group Meeting of Federation President's Topics continue for rest of day. In closing remarks, we had an exceptional amount of attendance at our Hybrid event LEGCON and one-hundred-year anniversary gala this past June. Let us all continue this momentum with moving NARFE forward together for our future.



1st VP Membership
Bill Krouse

Membership retention and recruitment continues to be a problem. There are no easy one size fits all solutions. The first step for each chapter, is to find out what the members are looking for in a NARFE chapter. Based on my observations, there are many members that are just looking for the social aspects. They want to meet in person over lunch somewhere. There are others that are actively working to support the NARFE agenda. And there are others that fit somewhere between the two.

The pandemic really brought out the differences. Based on my chapter, we had some very active members prior to the pandemic but they wanted no part of zoom meetings. There were other members, whom we never saw in person, but would join our meetings virtually. This

month, we had some from both groups join us for our first hybrid meeting. We had members and a speaker in person. And we saw some of our zoom only members join us virtually.

The question becomes, how do you reach your members? There are many members that don't use email. Hard copy mailings can be very expensive unless you can reach the USPS bulk mailing minimum of 200 addresses. In talking to many of my chapter's members, the newsletter is one of the primary reasons they stay in the chapters. Is the lack of the chapter newsletter the reason we lose National Only members more often than chapter members? At LEGcon21, the NARFE staff and presenters pushed social media. I am not convinced social media is going to attract or retain many of our older members but it may work with the younger workers which is the one demographic we need to attract.

One other problem is just because something worked before, is no guarantee it will work tomorrow. There is a new post-pandemic world. I doubt many of the in-person gatherings we used in the past to recruit like tables at installation health fairs, are going to happen in the future. It will all be virtual from now on.

As I said before there are no easy solutions but if you find something that works, share it with me, and I'll pass it on in a future newsletter. (billkrouse38@gmail.com)

One other point I want to emphasize before I close this article. I strongly encourage your chapter President or VP Membership to download your chapter membership periodically (i.e., once a month) and run the reports **and** save them. If you, do it monthly, do it before the 7th of the month. Around the 7th each month, HQ does a massive update where they remove members who did not renew. Recently, I ran a report at the Federation level for those members who recruited another member. I actually ran it twice for the previous month (on the 4th and 8th). On the report from the 4th two members were listed. On the report from the 8th only one was listed. The difference? The recruiter let his own membership lapse and he did not show up on the latter report.

Ch #	Chapter Name	Members Jan21/ Jun21	Change Jan21/ Jun21	Ch #	Chapter Name	Members Jan21/ Jun21	Change Jan21/ Jun21
	National Only	3637/3299	-338	1130	Johnstown	104/99	-5
102	Harrisburg	135/122	-13	1189	Pocono	33/31	-2
103	Reading	89/82	-7	1287	Lower Bucks - Levittown	98/88	-10
114	Pittsburgh Metro	280/0	-280	1301	Oxford Circle Phila.	228/215	-13
129	Scranton	55/52	-3	1371	Lehigh Valley	179/172	-7
143	Presque Isle - Erie	107/98	-9	1384	Montgomery County	238/225	-13
301	Lancaster	120/111	-9	1465	West Shore (Hbg) Camp Hill	216/203	-13
328	Altoona	61/56	-5	1556	Allegheny-Kiski Area	55/118	63
331	York	103/99	-4	1646	Susquehanna Valley	34/31	-3
342	Wilkes-Barre	77/68	-9	1723	Greater Pittston	74/67	-7
372	Norristown	137/127	-10	1782	McKean County-Bradford	62/61	-1
373	Carlisle	183/173	-10	1797	Adams-Hanover Area	98/89	-9
377	Chester County	154/147	-7	1816	Mechanicsburg	285/279	-6
404	Delaware County	141/134	-7	1855	Mon-Yough White Oak	87/124	37
412	Williamsport	55/47	-8	1861	Somerset	18/16	-2
413	Schuylkill	67/62	-5	1940	Media	57/57	0
458	Lebanon Valley	250/241	-9	2002	Fayco	31/83	52
657	New Castle Area	126/165	39	2093	Bedford County	30/32	2
664	Phila. Center Square	288/258	-30	2124	Indiana	50/44	-6
740	Doylestown	92/86	-6	2259	Pike-Wayne County	27/26	-1
1063	Chambersburg	673/630	-43				
1102	Easton	44/38	-6		Total	8878/8155	-723

DVP 10

As a District VP, it was a good experience at the virtual LEGcon21. There were excellent presentations on the first two days and it was good to meet with the staff and one Representative on the third day. It was good to see some representatives and senators from both parties supporting NARFE issues.

Back home in the 10th congressional district, we have 4 chapters. Mechanicsburg (1816) and West Shore (1465) have met virtually for both the exec and membership meetings throughout the pandemic. Both chapters are moving now to meet in person. Mechanicsburg will celebrate their 40th anniversary on August 24th in person. Carlisle's (373) Executive committee will be meeting in July in a hybrid fashion with some members meeting in person while others log in via zoom. To my knowledge, Harrisburg (102) has not met during the pandemic.



Rich Karakantas

Treasurer

Treasurer's Report

Beginning Balance 03/31/21	59,229.01
Income	<u>9,536.84</u>
Funds Available	68,765.85
Expenses	<u>(7,547.37)</u>
Ending Balance 06/30/21	61,218.48
Reserve Account Balance	59,040.73

I want to thank those that sent me a confirmation their chapter filed Form 990-N with the IRS. I would also like to thank those that sent me a copy of their chapter audit Form F-131. With many chapters just starting to meet again it is important to be up to date with these filing requirements and reports.

If you have questions or problems call me at 215-699-8399.



NARFE PAC
Brian Finn

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

The PA Federation was recently (March 2021) notifying that three PA members of congress received disbursements from NARFE PAC. They include Chrissy Houlahan, Matt Cartwright, and Brian Fitzpatrick.

All three have shown support for NARFE issues in Congress.



**2nd VP
Bill Staarman
Legislative Vice President:**

On June 21st to the 23rd I participated in NARFE's semi-annual Legislative Training Conference, LegCon21. This was my third conference but my first as a virtual participant. I must admit that I was somewhat skeptical for two reasons. I was concerned that the challenge would interfere with any benefit I would derive from the conference and more importantly what success could I achieve without a personal meeting. Neither was an impediment to the overall achievements.

What were the goals for a training session that brings over 250 members together from around the country? To train and develop the skills of our member to become better advocates to serve NARFE's mission. To become better informed about the legislative process and to make the most of the limited time and access to our legislators.

What goes on in a traditional Legislative Training Conferences? Members sign up and spend three days at a hotel in Alexandria, VA. The first two days includes intensive training on issues that NARFE supports. Members also learn the techniques for developing lasting relationships with legislators and their staff. On the third day members are bussed to Capitol Hill where they visit with representatives to convince them to help NARFE by co-sponsoring bills and voting for key legislation.

Each member is trained to become proficient in two or three issues and then convince the representative to support us. Because of the limited time available we streamline our discussions to 15 minutes. The training is intense but gratifying.

This year the pandemic forced us into social distancing and made it impossible to conduct the semiannual Legislative Conference in the traditional way. NARFE decided to go to a virtual platform. I worried that it would be too challenging technically. How could we deliver results without personal contact? How could we meet with Congressional staff to convince them of anything if we could not meet them face to face?

NARFE hired a company that built a virtual platform that was very much like the traditional setting. It was impressive. We logged on to their system and it took us inside a building and from there we entered our assigned rooms where an instructor was waiting for us, much like a webinar. When our classes ended, we went to the next session following the same format. Between intervals of free time there was a virtual lobby where we could gather as a group or one on one to plan strategy or just have a conversation.

One of the benefits of the virtual conference was that the meetings with Congressional offices were prearranged by the contractor. Traditionally, we had to schedule our own appointments. At the end of the second day, we received our congressional assignments including the time to meet and the name of the contact person. On the third day we were given a specific link to our assigned congressional office. When we logged in the representative was waiting for us on a Zoom platform. We presented our practiced agenda, asked for support on various bills, received feedback and asked questions.

They say that nothing beats personal contact, but this event came close. For a registration fee of \$135 reimbursed by the chapter or federation, it was a bargain.

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

At the recent LegCon21 conference I had dual responsibilities serving as team leader at most of the Congressional meetings and then as a participant at the session with Representative Houlahan's office. She represents the 6th Congressional District. I cannot overstate the value of those who spent three days training and then advocating for our members and the federal community overall.

From the Federation standpoint it was a great success because we reached out to many of our key legislators carrying our message and strengthening our relationship with congressional aids. Representative Mary K Scanlon, PA 5th participated in our meeting with her office. I was encouraged by the number of members who attended multiple meetings taking on several assignments each time.

We successfully reached out to eleven legislative offices' including both Senators. We were well received even if everyone did not agree with us. We talked about the Social Security Fairness Act, the Public Servants Fairness Act, the USPS Reform Act and the Fair COLA for Seniors. We asked that each Legislator sign on as a Co-Sponsors if they had not already do so. Our presenters had obviously done their homework because everyone achieved their objective in the time allotted.

Cynthia Mills and Mary Ann Hooker both National members joined our team. It was Mary Ann's first event, but Cynthia Mills brought experience to the group. Other first timers include Joan Larkin, Mary Lou Burton, William Krouse, Mary Howse, William Lennartz, Dough Dettling and Monika Drury. Richard Zuck, Larry Palecek, Tom Cline, and Bill Staarman also participated.

William Staarman



**Alzheimer's Chair
Dixie Gasper**

Alzheimer's Report

Most of you are aware the Alzheimer's campaigns runs yearly from July to June. As you will see, the donations Pennsylvania chapters donated are helping find a cure and all monies stay within the U.S.A.

We keep getting older and it is apparent some of us will start developing some type of dementia. Let's just hope we are not affected. The older you get the more you realize you have no desire for drama, conflicts or stress. You just want a cozy home, food on the table and be surrounded by kind people and family who make you happy. Our thoughts and prayers are for our family members, friends and co-workers to get the help they need.

As our NARFE chapter keep losing members, please try to encourage your members to participate in some type of a fundraiser to support Alzheimer's.

Dixie Lee Gasper

Alzheimer's Chairperson.

PA FEDERATION ALZHEIMER'S CHAPTER DONATIONS

(July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021)

District 1		NONE
District 2	1301 Oxford Circle	\$75.00
District 3	664 Philadelphia Center Square	\$904.00
District 4	372 Norristown	\$510.00
District 5		NONE
District 6	377 Chester County	\$72.00
District 7	1102 Easton Area	\$40.00
District 8		NONE
District 9	458 Lebanon Valley	\$684.00
District 10	372 Carlisle	\$700.00
	1465 West Shore	\$550.00
	1816 Mechanicsburg	\$655.00
District 11	301 Lancaster	\$200.00
	331 York	\$350.00
District 12		NONE
District 13	1063 Chambersburg	\$1,000.00
District 14		NONE
District 15	1130 Johnstown	\$119.00
District 16	143 Presque Isle	\$660.00
	657 New Castle	\$425.00
District 17	114 Pittsburgh	\$550.00
TOTAL		\$7,485.00



Webmaster

The call is out for registrations for the PA NARFE General Membership Meeting (GMM) on Sep 14 in York PA. Details are on the PA NARFE Website <https://www.narfe.org/site/PA/>. The GMM will be hybrid. There will be a meeting in person and there will be a virtual capability where registrants can log into the meeting. More details will be emailed and posted on the website later.

If you are using zoom or other virtual platforms to conduct your meetings, remember you zoom etiquette. If you are not talking, please mute yourself. The problems may not be apparent if you are using a computer screen with a gallery view but members who use a speaker view or smart phones will find it distracting for the constant switching back and forth with every extraneous sound.

I have mentioned this before but it is worth mentioning again. NARFE PA has bought a zoom account that has an unlimited meeting time for chapters to use to hold executive and chapter meetings. I will help you set it up. This account can be used for virtual only or for hybrid meetings. Zoom is one way that we can “get together” in NARFE for those that aren’t ready to go back into public sessions

Editor Joanne Dine

York 331 are now back to having regular meetings at Our Place, formerly the Meadow Hill Family Restruant. In September three of our members are going to a picnic in Lancaster. I hope things continue to get back to normal.

Joanne

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)	Raymond Hain
14	Allegheny Kiski (1556), Fayco (2002)	
15	Johnstown (1130), McKean County Area (1782), Indiana Area (2124)	Larry Palecek
16	Presque Isle (143), New Castle Area (657)	Richard Zuck (acting)
17/18	Mon Yough (1855)	Jerome Funderwhite

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