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Word from Chapter President

It's been an exciting eight months since becoming President of Chapter 1594. During this quarter, I attended a meeting of Boerne Chapter 778 and learned that we are experiencing the same challenges – declining membership, difficulty getting members to run for officer positions and lack of volunteers for other required positions. On July 24, I attended a FERS retirement seminar at Region 20. Approximately 105 civil servants were given NARFE packets. Packets contained information about NARFE to include membership registration forms plus a registration card for a \$25 gift card from Walmart. Dr. John Creswell, Dorothy Creswell, Al Dreumont and I enjoyed the morning meeting potential members and catching up on what's going on around NARFE. I have enjoyed scheduling and getting to know the various speakers we've had this year. They are amazing people taking time off their busy work schedules to share with us what their jobs encompass and how we can help by volunteering and donating to the causes they support. I can't wait to see what the next quarter brings and sharing it with you.



Gerry Rendon

NARFE's 2019 Membership Drive September 1 to December 31

San Antonio Chapter 1594 members are urged to go around recruiting friends you may know who are active or retired Federal employees to join NARFE. The more members we have, the louder our voice. Prizes for recruiters are:

- Recruiters will receive \$10 for each new member, current OR retired, who joins between September 1 and December 31, 2019. (Applications must be postmarked, and calls or website joins must be received no later than December 31, 2019. Your membership # found on the label of NARFE Magazine must be provided when the new member joins.)



- All September-December recruiters will be entered in a drawing, one time for each new member they have recruited.

• **GRAND PRIZE:** A Kindle Fire will be awarded to a recruiter randomly selected from this pool. The Grand Prize will be selected by mid-January.

MONTHLY PRIZES: Each month a name will be selected from the pool of recruiters for a \$25 Amazon.com gift card. The pool includes an entry for every new member recruited and accumulates throughout the contest. Gift card winners will be selected on October 1, November 1 and December 2.

• Winners of a monthly prize remain eligible for the Grand Prize as well as all monthly drawings.

Ask the Membership Chair for membership brochures (includes a self-mailer application) and other helpful aids or use the membership application in NARFE Magazine.

Membership Chair: Al Dreumont
Email: adreumont@satx.rr.com
Phone: (210) 637-0032

Connie Walker
conniebee@satx.rr.com
(210) 673-2290



WEP Receives Hill Attention

The House of Representatives was busy debating Social Security reform during its last week in session before the six-week August recess. Rep. Kevin Brady, R-TX, introduced legislation, the Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act of 2019, H.R.3934, which would reform the unfair Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). NARFE supports the bill. Additionally, the Ways and Means Committee debated the future of the Social Security program in a hearing, and NARFE sent a letter to the committee regarding the Social Security 2100 Act, H.R. 860, urging that the legislation be adjusted to treat federal retirees fairly with regard to cost-of-living increases.

The WEP reduces the Social Security benefits of federal retirees who receive benefits from having worked in both the private and public sectors. The Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act would reform the WEP by changing the Social Security benefit calculation for WEP-affected beneficiaries moving forward. The bill also would provide WEP-affected individuals who are currently age 60 and older with a monthly rebate of \$100, adjusted annually by the COLA. Individuals receiving a WEP-reduced Social Security benefit based on their spouses' employment would receive a \$50 per month rebate.

Although H.R. 3934 does not fully repeal the WEP, it represents a significant improvement over the status quo, which unfairly punishes CSRS retirees for their public service -- for that reason, NARFE supports the bill.

The Social Security 2100 Act proposes numerous adjustments to improve and expand Social Security benefits, but it does not extend comparable changes to federal annuities. For instance, the bill would switch calculation of Social Security COLAs from the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) to the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E) but does not do so for federal annuities.

June Meeting at Golden Corral

Chapter President Gerry Rendon welcomed all members and introduced new members and guests. After a silent prayer and pledge of allegiance, he invited everyone to enjoy their buffet meal.

A short meeting was called, starting with the birthday and anniversary announcements. Birthdays: Jane Garcia, Georgia Lindinger, Earl



Chapter Members
at Golden Corral

Harris, Ofelia Olivares and Dolores Rutledge. Anniversaries: David and Isabel Cuellar (68th) and Al and Carmen Dreumont (56th).

Items of Interest covered: a. On the NARFE Website, NARFE Advocacy Tab, Go to Take Action. Shows support for a modest pay increase in 2020, supports the Equal COLA Act in 2019, supports the FAIR Act of 2019, supports the Federal Retirement Fairness Act, supports the Social Security Fairness Act of 2019 and supports the Fair COLA for Seniors Act of 2019. On NARFE website, select "NARFE Advocacy" tab to access; b. OPM Services On-line - OPM security requires accounts to be deactivated after 15 months of inactivity. If you have not logged on in the past 13 months, log on within the next 60 days to prevent being deactivated.

Old Business: a. Chapter 1594 will continue paying first year membership fees for any active and retired Federal employee joining Chapter; b. Proposal to amend by-laws will be addressed at the July meeting; and c. Officer/Committee reports will be reported at the July meeting.

New Business: NARFE "Feds Feed Families" food drive will run June 1st through August 23rd. Money collected will be mailed to the San Antonio Food Bank at the end of each month.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m. Next meeting is July 17th, 2019 at Brookhill Baptist Church, 631 Utopia Ln, San Antonio, TX 78223.

Christine Cuellar, Secretary, San Antonio Chapter 1594



Chapter members
at Golden Corral

July Meeting

Chapter President Gerry Rendon welcomed all members and introduced guests. After a prayer and pledge of allegiance, he congratulated members having birthdays and anniversaries. Only one birthday in July – Rita Horton while Lupe and Stella Flores celebrated their anniversary.

Items of interests discussed: BC/BS will remain an in-network provider with Methodist Hospital System, Federal Trade Commission warns that criminals are pretending to be from the government in order to scam people out of money and personal information, House of Representatives approved a 3.1% raise for 2020 for active Federal employees and it now goes to the Senate for consideration, and page 3 of the agenda is a list of White House and Texas Congressional Representatives contact information. Also, the NARFE toll-free to Washington.

1st speaker Philip Cortez, State Representative for District 117, spoke to the members about the 86th legislative session and bills passed. A handout was passed out listing bills introduced by him and signed into law by Governor Greg Abbott. These included \$140.9 million for Adult Protective Services to ensure senior citizens are better protected from abuse, neglect and exploitation. For Veterans, HB 1351 was introduced to protect the data of veterans and their families. Other bills covered school safety and public health, specifically regarding the availability of epinephrine auto-inject pens. Other bills covering jobs and elections were listed in the handout. He was presented with a Chapter 1594 gift mug by 1st VP Al Dreumont in appreciation for his visit.

2nd speaker Jon Arnold, Special Projects Manager for Representative Will Hurd, spoke to the members. He thanked Mr. Cortez for his efforts on behalf of veterans, especially at the state level, which impacts the



State
Representative
Philip Cortez

national level. Mr. Arnold discussed that there are 8,000 Federal employees in Mr. Hurd's district with 175,000 in Texas. Mr. Hurd has focused on Social Security and health issues. He has opposed Medicare cuts and has fought to protect these rights. He also voted for legislation to reopen the government during the last shutdown. He co-sponsored a bill, USPS Fairness Act, which repealed the requirement of USPS personnel to pre-pay for their retirement benefits. Other items included changing the COLA for the elderly to CPI for the elderly. Mr. Arnold discussed Mr. Hurd's recent voting trend which shows a departure from straight line party voting. Mr. Arnold also was presented with a Chapter 1594 gift mug by Ms. Rita Horton in appreciation for his visit.

Connie Bedock, Membership Chair, reported Chapter has 116 members and mentioned a "Get Well" card was sent to Jovita Durand who was hospitalized with kidney concerns. Mr. Gamboa joined our chapter last month.

Margarita Hernandez, Treasurer, reported the Chapter had \$2,829.54 in checking and savings for May 2019. For June 2019, there was a balance of \$2790.44 for checking and savings.

Christine Cuellar circulated minutes for May and June, no changes noted.

David Cuellar, NARFE/PAC Chair, reported he received \$405.00 this year to date. Our Chapter does not include monies sent directly to National.

Shirley Swift, Legislative Chair, circulated her report. She reminded the members it only costs \$3.33 per month to become a member. Also, August is NARFE's Grassroots Advocacy Month. The House approved paid family leave for Federal employees. The House has blocked OPM's reorganization plan a second time. This is to stop it from being placed under the Executive Office.

Old Business: Chapter will continue to pay first year membership. Proposal to Amend By-laws or Standing Rule will be emailed to members and for those without email account, a copy provided at next meeting. NARFE "Feds Feed Families" Food Drive for 2019 shows our Chapter collected \$165 in June and \$80 in July. Mrs. Hernandez will mail a check in the amount collected after each meeting to the San Antonio Food Bank.

New Business: Walk to End Alzheimer's will be held on October 12th in New Braunfels. Gerry Rendon will again participate. Donations will be accepted through end of December.

Christine Cuellar, Secretary, San Antonio Chapter 1594

August Meeting

Chapter President Gerry Rendon welcomed all members and introduced guests. He welcomed new member Santa Maria Jones to the Chapter. After a prayer and pledge of allegiance, he congratulated members celebrating birthdays and anniversaries. Six members celebrated birthdays: Frances Marthijoni, Lawrence Spencer, Mary Kilgore, Lynda Guzman, Adeline McAdams, and Connie Jo Popham. Jesse and Joyce Gorden celebrated their 67th anniversary.

Speaker for month of August was Mr. Sam Pantoja Jr., NARFE-PAC Coordinator and TF National Legislative Officer. He spoke of the 116th Congress Legislation affecting the Federal community. In particular, he addressed:

- a. GPO/WEP (H.R. 141/S. 521: Social Security Fairness Act of 2019 sponsored by Rep. Rodney Davis, R-IL and Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-OH). H.R. 141/S. 521 repeals the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). They have been referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Committee on Finance.



Jon Arnold being presented with mug in appreciation for his visit by Rita Horton

- b. GPO/WEP (H.R. 3934: Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act of 2019 sponsored by Rep. Kevin Brady, R-TX). H.R. 3934 provides a \$100 rebate (\$50 for surviving spouses) to those first eligible for benefits before 2022 (ages 60 and older in 2019). WEP affected individuals eligible for benefits from 2022 to 2060 (ages 21 to 59 in 2019) would be subject to either a new formula created by the bill or the current WEP formula, whichever is more beneficial. Those eligible for benefits in 2061 (age 20 and under in 2019) would be subject to the new formula. This has been referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.
- c. COLAs (H.R. 1553: Fair COLA for Seniors Act of 2019 sponsored by Rep. John Garamendi, D-CA). H.R. 1553 requires Social Security and federal retirement programs to use the Consumer Price Index for Elderly (CPI-E) to calculate cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) to retirement benefits. This has been referred to the House Committee Ways and Means, Veterans' Affairs, Oversight and Reform, and Armed Forces.



Sam Pantoja Jr. being presented with a mug in appreciation for his presentation to Chapter members by Gerry Rendon

Mr. Pantoja also added that when you're contacting a congressman to ask for his/her support of a House or Senate bill, to be prepared with what you are going to say. He recommended you first identify yourself, secondly let him/her know where you are calling from to include your zip code, thirdly what did you work on while a civil servant and length of your career, and finally how this bill will benefit you.

Mr. Pantoja also discussed the upcoming November 5, 2019 election on the topic of taxes. There will be a proposition (Texas Proposition 4, Prohibit State Income Tax on Individual Amendment 2019). The way this proposition was written is purposely confusing. If you are not in favor of a state income tax:

A "YES" vote supports this amendment to prohibit the state from levying an income tax on individuals. A

A "NO" vote opposes this amendment, thus continuing to allow the state to enact a tax on individuals in the future through a statewide referendum.

Under items of interest, Mr. Rendon informed members NARFE has rebranded itself with new logos that have been distributed throughout NARFE for immediate use. He also reminded everyone to start thinking of names for consideration for the upcoming 2020 election of officers in October.

Connie Bedock, Membership Chair, reported we have 118 members with two new membership applications received at the meeting.

Margarita Hernandez, Treasurer, reported Chapter has \$329.49 in checking and \$2,481.16 in savings for a total of \$2,810.65 at end of July 31st.

Old Business: Chapter will continue paying first year's membership fee of \$40 for new members, by-laws were approved and will be finalized for signature by secretary before being sent to HQ NARFE for final approval, \$65 was collected for "Feds Feed Families" for August, and Chapter President Gerry Rendon will be participating in the New Braunfels W2EA at Landa Park. Donations to this cause will be accepted through December 31st.



Members at August Meeting

New Business: NARFE Membership Drive will run from 1 September – 31 December. See attachment for details.

Mr. Pantoja won the 50/50 and donated his half (\$19) to the Alzheimer's Association.

FROM



TO



NARFE Reveals New Look

NARFE embarked on a rebranding initiative more than a year ago when research showed that the NARFE brand did not resonate among most audiences. NARFE is many things to many people, yet among all, NARFE is a trustworthy resource on the earned pay and benefits of federal employees and retirees.

You've heard the phrase "a picture is worth a thousand words." Well, NARFE's new look and tagline summarize the entire organization in just three: federal benefits experts.

This month's newsletter includes the new NARFE logo plus cosmetic changes we hope you will like.

Chapter Membership

At the end of this quarter, the Chapter has 118 members. New members joining or transferring into the chapter during this quarter were: Cindy Dye, Armando Gamboa, Sarah Toten and Lillian Bosquez. John Whitney and Ernestine Guerrero were dropped for nonpayment of dues.

Primary loss of members is due to nonpayment of dues. Members have the dues withholding option available which allows \$3.42 to be taken out of their monthly allotment. This is also a 15% discount because the annual dues are \$41.00 by using dues withholding versus paying the annual payment of \$47.00. If you are interested in dues withholding, call Connie Bedock at 210-673-2290 and she will mail you a form. We also have 10 active federal employees in the chapter. If you are still working, you can join NARFE. This is the only organization dedicated to protecting the earned retirement benefits of federal employees, retirees, and their survivors.



Items of Interest



Feds Feed Families: During this year's Feds Feed Families drive that ran from 1 June through 23 August, our members donated \$305. These funds were mailed to the San Antonio Food Bank. This donation will enable Food Bank to continue fighting hunger in Southwest Texas through food distribution, programs, education, and advocacy.

Alzheimer's: The new Alzheimer's fundraising figure as of July 31, 2019 is \$13,195,818.25. \$21,220.25 was raised during July. This year, Chapter 1594 will once again be participating in the Walk to End Alzheimer's in New Braunfels. Chapter members may donate to this cause at our monthly meetings through December 31st. If you prefer, you may also make an online donation by going to Gerry's webpage with the Alzheimer's Association. Link



is https://act.alz.org/site/TR?fr_id=12430&pg=personal&px=15411613. Gerry and other Chapter members will be walking with NARFE New Braunfels Team, Chapter 672.



FEHB Open Season: This year’s FEHB Open Season will run from Monday November 11, 2019 - Monday December 9, 2019. At our monthly November 13th meeting, we will be hosting a mini-health fair where representatives from Blue Cross Blue Shield, Humana and Aetna will be in attendance to explain changes for 2020 and answer any questions you may have regarding services provided. The effective date of any Open Season change is the first day of the first full pay period in January for active federal employees and always January 1st for annuitants.

Upcoming Events

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| Chapter Meeting | Sep 18 |
| Exec Committee Meeting | Oct 9 |
| Walk to End Alzheimer’s (W2EA) | Oct 12 |
| In New Braunfels (Landa Park) | |
| Chapter Meeting | Oct 16 |
| Chapter Meeting (Health Fair) | Nov 13 |
| Chapter Xmas Luncheon | Dec 11 |

Birthdays & Anniversaries

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| Jane Garcia | June |
| Georgia Lindinger | June |
| Earl Harris | June |
| Ofelia Olivares | June |
| Dolores Rutledge | June |
| Rita Horton | July |
| Frances Marthijoni | August |
| Lawrence Spencer | August |
| Mary Kilgore | August |
| David & Isabel Cuellar (68) | June |
| Al & Carmen Dreumont (56) | June |
| Lupe & Stella Flores | July |
| Jesse & Joyce Gorden (67) | August |

SEPTEMBER 2019						
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DECEMBER						
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Keep Up with Us



Chapter Officers

Name	Title	Phone
Gerry Rendon	President	(210) 213-4169
Al Dreumont	1 st Vice President	(210) 637-0032
Shirley Swift	2 nd Vice President	(210) 300-9046
Christine Cuellar	Secretary	(210) 647-1424
Margarita Hernandez	Treasurer	(210) 679-5381

Meeting Information

Upcoming

Meetings: September 18th October 16th November 13th December 11th

Place: Brookhill Baptist Church, 631 Utopia Ln., San Antonio, Texas 78223 (Current Location)

Date: Every third Wednesday of the month (unless rescheduled)

Time: 12:30 p.m. regular meetings & 11:00 a.m. lunch meetings in June and December
(restaurant selected month prior to meeting)

If you need a ride to the meeting or are interested in giving a member a ride, please let one of the officers know.