



NARFE NEWSLETTER

GREATER BOWIE-CROFTON AREA CHAPTER 1747
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

Volume 39 No. 5

narfe.org/chapter1747

January 2021

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS are held at the Bowie Senior Center, 14900 Health Center Drive Bowie, 20716 in Room 4. Meeting dates are the third Thursday of the month at 10:00 AM except in July and August. There is never a charge to attend and all meetings are open to the public. Please check your current newsletter or our website for any changes.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS are held the first Thursday of the month at 10:00 AM in Conference Room 125, Bowie Senior Center. All chapter members are welcome.

POSTAL ADDRESS: NARFE Chapter 1747, P.O. Box 504, Bowie, MD 20718

NOTE: Chapter meetings are cancelled when Prince George's County schools are closed due to inclement weather. Otherwise, meetings are held as scheduled.

UPCOMING MEETING

Virtual Meetings Using Zoom

- Jan 7** Executive Board Meeting, 10a
Virtual Meeting Using Zoom
- Jan 14** NARFE Webinar 2:00p, Expecting the Unexpected: What We Learned from the Pandemic
- Jan 21** Taxes, 10a, Diane Polangin
Virtual Meeting Using Zoom
- Feb 4** Executive Board Meeting, 10a
Virtual Meeting Using Zoom
- Feb 18** NARFE Advocacy Program Update, 10a
Marsha Goad, Virtual Meeting Using Zoom

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Frank Lee

2020 was a very challenging year for everyone because of the coronavirus pandemic. In spite of many challenges, we were able to survive the year with many achievements including:

Avoiding Coronavirus

Because we were vigilant in following CDC guidelines and wore face masks and practiced social distancing, most of us were able to avoid coronavirus. The few members who contacted coronavirus were able to recover.

Successful Presidential Election

We held a successful presidential election and President Elect Biden won the election with over 81 million votes and 306 electoral votes. His margin of victory was over 7 million votes. In spite of President Trump's allegations, the election was not rigged and there was no widespread voter fraud. The Department of Homeland Security declared the election to be the most secure election ever held. The president went to extraordinary means to try to win the election by

attacking the integrity of the vote. Our democracy was saved because State and local officials, both Republican and Democrat and the courts, including the Supreme Court upheld the law to protect the integrity of the election and would not let the results be corrupted.

Election of President Elect Biden

We elected a decent man with a long history of public service who will follow the law and defend the constitution. He will be a strong defender of our democracy and will work hard to promote the interests of the people. His first task will be to develop and implement a national plan based on science to defeat coronavirus.

Development of Multiple Coronavirus Vaccines

The Trump administration developed multiple vaccines under Operation Warp Speed to combat a disease discovered less than a year ago. This is a remarkable achievement, never achieved before in vaccine development. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have been approved by the FDA and health care workers have begun to be vaccinated with the vaccine. It is hoped that 20 million people will be vaccinated by the end of the year and that 100 million people will be vaccinated by the end of March.

New Coronavirus Relief Bill

The Congress passed a new \$900 billion coronavirus relief bill to help people and businesses impacted by coronavirus. The bill includes \$600 stimulus checks, enhanced federal unemployment benefits and money for small businesses, schools and child care, as well as for vaccine distribution. It will also repurpose \$429 billion in unused funds provided by the Cares Act for emergency lending programs run by the Federal Reserve. President Trump signed the new Coronavirus Relief Bill on Sunday, December 27. The bill also provides funding for government agencies through September 2021.



Resumption of Chapter Meetings Using Zoom

We were able to resume our chapter meetings using Zoom in September. At our last chapter meeting in November, we had 24 attendees.

Collection for Alzheimer's Fund

We are taking up a collection for the Alzheimer's Fund. When we met in person, we took up the collection through our monthly raffle. Since we can't do that now, we are asking members to please send in their donation by check to NARFE Chapter 1747, P.O. Box 514, Bowie, MD 20718. Since senior citizens are primary beneficiaries of the fund, we are asking everyone to support this fund. We have received \$220.00 in donations from people so far. Please donate if you have not already done so. Thanks in advance for your contribution.

Joining Zoom Meetings

Thanks to those who are participating in our monthly chapter meetings using Zoom. I encourage those who have not yet done so to please join our monthly meetings using zoom. You do not need a Zoom account to join a meeting. You just need to click on the link in the invitation E-mail that I send you to join a Zoom meeting using your computer. If you don't have a computer, you can join a Zoom meeting by telephone by calling Zoom at 301-715-8592 and entering the meeting ID and Passcode that I give you. While meeting through Zoom may not be as personal as meeting in person, this is the way we have to communicate until the pandemic is over and we can resume in person meetings. The important thing is that through Zoom, we can still hold our monthly meetings and provide you information on the status of Federal benefits and issues and information on subjects of special interest to senior citizens. We need your active participation in our chapter, so please join our monthly meetings using Zoom.

Chapter 1747 Internship Program

We have started an internship program to get more members involved in our operations, learn how the chapter operates and be potential new officers. This is especially important because we will have an election for officers in May 2021 and need to ensure that we have enough officers to lead the chapter into the future. We need to find and train new officers because some of our officers have been with the chapter for more than 10 years and may retire soon and because Vanessa and I are currently performing multiple functions and need more help. We met with our officers and interns on November 12 and assigned our interns designated tasks to learn how our chapter operates. Through this program, we have found two new officers, Bruce Thoman who will be our new Network Coordinator and Charles Smith who will be our Network Coordinator/Social Media Coordinator. Please congratulate our new officers. Please let me know if you would like to join the internship program and get involved in the operation of our chapter.

Electoral College Elects Joe Biden to be Our New President

President Elect Biden won the 2020 presidential election by over 81 million votes with 306 electoral votes. In spite of President Trump's allegations, the election was not rigged and there was no widespread voter fraud. The Department of Homeland Security declared that the 2020 election was the most secure election in American history. President Trump's efforts to undermine the election did not succeed as state and local officials upheld the election results by certifying the President Elect's victory and courts including the U.S. Supreme Court rejected the Trump administration's more than 50 lawsuits alleging voting irregularities. Two lawsuits which reached the Supreme Court were rejected by the court without a hearing. The Supreme Court ruled that Texas had not shown it has a legal interest in the manner in which another state conducts its elections. No justice expressed support for throwing out election results. The president went to extraordinary means to try to win the election by attacking the integrity of the vote. He tried to get officials in Michigan and Pennsylvania to recruit electoral college delegates who would vote for him even though he did not win the popular vote in these states. He tried to get the Governor of Georgia to change the vote so that he could win there. He tried to void the vote in Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin by having Texas object to the manner in which these states conducted their election. Officials in these states did not support the actions proposed by the president. Our democracy was saved because State and local officials, both Republican and Democrat and the courts upheld the law

to protect the integrity of the election and would not let the election results be corrupted.

The electoral college met on Monday, December 14 and elected Joseph Biden to be our 46th president with 306 electoral votes.

Coronavirus Pandemic Update

The good news is that the FDA has approved the Pfizer coronavirus vaccine and health care workers have begun to be vaccinated with the vaccine. The second bit of good news is that the FDA approved the Moderna vaccine last Friday and made it available for distribution starting this week.

Under Operation Warp Speed, the Trump administration invested about \$10 billion in eight vaccine candidates, purchasing hundreds of millions of doses of vaccines before they were provided, clearing away regulatory hurdles, and putting a four-star General, Gustave Perna in charge of logistics and distribution. The administration pledged \$1.95 billion for the purchase and nationwide distribution of 100 million doses of Pfizer's vaccine. It also provided \$955 million to support the development of Moderna's vaccine and another \$1.5 billion to support large scale manufacturing and distribution of the vaccine. It also pledged to purchase 100 million vaccine doses each from AstraZenca (\$1.2 billion), Johnson & Johnson (\$1.46 billion) and Novavax (\$1.6 billion), all of which are in final, Phase 3 clinical trials. The strategy was not without risks – the government provided about \$2 billion to Sanofi and GlaxoSmithKline for 100 million doses of their vaccine, which recently suffered setbacks. But because the administration spent billions to buy vaccines before the clinical trials were over, it is now able to distribute upward of half a billion doses of vaccine over the coming months. Moncef Slaoui, chief science advisor to Operation Warp Speed hoped that between the first and second quarter of 2021 that the most at risk populations will have been immunized. This, he said "should decrease drastically the burden of this disease on society in general, because...most of the burden of the disease is on high-risk populations." He expects that the worst of the pandemic will be over by next summer. Public health officials hope that at least 70 percent of the population will agree to get vaccinated to achieve herd immunity and stop the virus's spread. The Trump administration should be given credit for the successful development of multiple vaccines under Operation Warp Speed to combat a disease discovered less than a year ago. This is a remarkable achievement, never achieved before in vaccine development. However, we cannot overlook the administration's many failures to address the pandemic such as opposing public health measures to fight the pandemic and claims that the pandemic was over or would go away on its own. Because of these failures, we have suffered more than 300,000 deaths, and are experiencing record increases in new cases, hospitalizations and deaths. The coronavirus vaccines will help us conquer coronavirus. However, the vaccines will not be available to most people for several months. Until then, we must use the tools available to us to avoid catching covid-19 including wearing face masks, practicing social distancing, and avoiding large gatherings.

New Coronavirus Relief Bill

Congress has just passed a \$900 billion coronavirus relief bill. The bill will extend aid to millions of people through stimulus checks, enhanced federal unemployment benefits and money for small businesses, schools, and child care, as well as for vaccine distribution. It also repurposes \$429 billion in unused funds provided by the Cares Act for emergency lending programs run by the Federal Reserve. The bill was based on a proposal developed by a bipartisan group of Democrat and Republican senators. Provisions of the bill include:

- **Stimulus checks:** The legislation includes \$600 stimulus checks per person, including adults and children.
- **Jobless benefits:** Congress will extend unemployment benefits of up to \$300 per week. An unemployment benefits program for contract and gig workers would also be extended.
- **Relief for businesses:** The bill includes more than \$284 billion for first and second forgivable Paycheck Protection Program loans, expanded PPP eligibility for nonprofit organizations and news outlets, and modifications to the program to serve small businesses, nonprofits, and independent

restaurants. The bill also ensures that churches and faith-based organizations are eligible for PPP loans.

- **Emergency rental assistance and eviction moratoriums:** The agreement extends a moratorium on evictions until January 31. It also includes \$25 billion in emergency assistance to renters.
- **Money for vaccine distribution:** This bill includes \$20 billion for the purchase of vaccines "that will make the vaccine available at no charge for anyone who needs it".
- **School funding:** Colleges and schools will have \$82 billion to help cover HVAC repair and replacement to reduce the risk of coronavirus infections and reopen classrooms. The bill also includes \$10 billion for child-care assistance.
- **Other categories:** The package includes legislation to end surprise billing for emergency and scheduled care; provides a tax credit to support employers offering paid sick leave; \$13 billion in increased food stamps and nutrition benefits; and \$7 billion to increase access to broadband.

The coronavirus relief bill is part of a bill to fund federal agencies through September 30, 2021. The bill only extends federal unemployment benefits to mid-March, even though millions of people probably will be out of work for far longer. Therefore, more spending may be needed next year. Many economists think that the package is large enough to prevent the economy from backsliding further in the coming months.

The bill omitted direct State and local aid. States and local governments spent a lot of money fighting coronavirus this year because the administration delegated the task of fighting coronavirus down to the states. States used monies that they did not budget for and had to divert from other priorities. The states need federal assistance to recover some of these funds in order not to lay off workers including first responders, medical personnel and policemen and firemen. Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act – known as the "Cares Act" in March. Economists credit it with preventing a recession similar to the Great Depression. It pumped over \$2.5 trillion into the economy in the spring and summer but ended too soon, causing nearly 8 million people to fall into poverty in recent months. Economists say that there may be a need for more traditional stimulus in 2021 such as a major infrastructure bill that could boost growth and jobs for years to come.

Future Programs

We have a great series of programs scheduled for next year.

- January 21** - Taxes
- February 18** - NARFE Advocacy Program Update,
- March 18** - Common Foot Problems.
- April 15** - Aging in Place.
- May 20** - Legislative Wrap-Up.
- June 17** - Annual Social Event. New chapter officers will be sworn in.

Please join us for these exciting presentations. All of the presentations will be virtual events using Zoom except for the Annual Social Event in June if circumstances permit.

MD NARFE-PAC

This PAC through the MD Federation's State Legislation Committee supports legislation beneficial to seniors by raising and spending money to elect members of the MD General Assembly who support NARFE's legislative program. Please make your check payable to MDNARFE-PAC and send it to Robert Doyle, Treasurer, MD NARFE – PAC, 422i6 Carvel Lane, Edgewater, MD 21031.



MEMBERSHIP CHAIR - Lillie Watson

Chapter Activity Report 11/1/2020-12/15/2020

- 503** Chapter 1747 Members as of 12/22/20
- 02** New Chapter Members: A.V. McCoy Jr, Peggie Brown
- 10** Members Dropped for Non-Renewal
- 04** Members Passed Away: Dixie Lee Favey, Ruth A. Kluth, Patricia M. Smith, Virginia M. Dorn
- 00** Members Sent Second Notice

TREASURER REPORT - Vanessa Washington

Balance on: Oct 31, 2020	\$9,806.60
Income:	\$274.25
Expenses:	\$293.60
Balance on: Nov 30, 2020	\$9,787.25
Reserve for Alzheimer's Fund	\$45.00*

CHAPTER 1747 OFFICERS

Officer	Name	Contact #	Email
President	Frank Lee	410-672-5065	Filee0716@verizon.net
Vice President	Kent Nilsson	301-613-9868	Kentnilsson@hue.com
Treasurer	Vanessa Washington	240-334-2712	vwash411@comcast.net
Asst. Treasurer	Louise Cole	410-672-6528	Col9135@aol.com
Secretary	Vacant	--	--
Committee Chairs			
Federal Legislation	Frank Lee	410-672-5065	Filee0716@verizon.net
State Legislation	Edward Bice	301-464-3748	de3637@verizon.net
Chapter Editor	Vanessa Washington	240-334-2712	vwash411@comcast.net
Alzheimer Chair	Edward Bice	301-464-3748	de3637@verizon.net
NARFE/PAC Chair	Edward Bice	301-464-3748	de3637@verizon.net
Network Coordinator	Bruce Thoman	--	thomanBruce@gmail.com
Social Media Coordinator	Charles Smith	301-502-421	bigfoodmmd@yahoo.com
Membership Chair	Lillie Watson	301-383-1597	Lwatson15@hotmail.com
Service Officer	Rhonda Hackley	301-335-0493	rmhackley7168@gmail.com