



# NARFE NEWSLETTER

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

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[narfe.org/chapter1747](http://narfe.org/chapter1747)

March 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 MEETINGS

### Virtual Meetings Using Zoom

- Mar 4** Executive Board Meeting, 10a  
Virtual Meeting Using Zoom
- Mar 18** Common Foot Problems, 10a  
Dr. La Vergne Andre  
Virtual Meeting Using Zoom
- April 1** Executive Board Meeting, 10a Virtual Meeting Using Zoom
- April 15** Aging in Place, 10a, Cary Hithon  
Virtual Meeting Using Zoom

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Frank Lee

Wednesday, January 20, 2021 was a remarkable day. We saw Joseph R. Biden sworn in as our 46th president.

We also celebrated democracy and diversity and heard a call for national unity. During the Trump administration, we saw repeated instances of anti-democratic behavior including ignoring the law and the constitution and attempts to undermine the election of Joseph Biden as our new president. Because state and local officials, and state courts and the Supreme Court successfully defended the election results and rejected numerous attempts to undermine election results, our democracy was saved and Joseph R. Biden was declared the winner of the 2020 presidential election.

"This is democracy's day," Biden declared. "Today, we celebrate the triumph not of a candidate, but of a cause, the cause of democracy.... We learned again that democracy is precious. Democracy is fragile. At this hour, my friends, democracy has prevailed."

Biden cited the dishonesty of the Trump years, particularly the former president's Big Lie casting Biden's own election as illegitimate. "Recent weeks and months have taught us a painful lesson," Biden said. "There is truth and there are lies, lies told for power and for profit. And each of us has a duty and responsibility, as citizens, as Americans, and especially as leaders, leaders who have pledged to honor our Constitution and protect our nation, to defend the truth and defeat the lies."

Poet, Amanda Gorman said, "Somehow we've weathered and witnessed a nation that isn't broken but simply unfinished."

January 20, 2021 was also a celebration of diversity. Kamala Harris an Asian and black woman was sworn in to be our new Vice President, the first woman to assume the second highest position in the nation. Alex Padilla, was sworn in as the first Hispanic senator from California. Jewish millennial Jon Ossoff and African American preacher Ralph Warnock were sworn in as senators from Georgia. We witnessed more diversity in one day than in the four years of the Trump presidency.

President Biden also issued a call for national unity. He said, "We must end this uncivil war that pits red against blue, rural versus urban, conservative versus liberal. We can do this if we open our souls instead of hardening our hearts." He said that, "Our history has been a constant struggle between the American ideal that we're all created equal and the harsh, ugly reality that racism, nativism, fear, demonization have long torn us apart," "The battle is perennial, and victory is never assured."

We must defend our ability to hold fair and honest elections and oppose attempts to remain in power by undermining the results of an honest election.

The truth won over lies and conspiracy theories. We must continue to be vigilant and defend democracy.



## 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. Through this program, we have found two new officers, Bruce Thoman our new Network Coordinator and Charles Smith our new Social Media Coordinator. Bruce has expanded and updated the list of members and other people who receive electronic copies of our monthly newsletter. Charles has begun an effort to create a Facebook page for our chapter. Through the program, we also have trained members on how to address and prepare our newsletter for mailing and are training members on how to collect our monthly statistics. Another member is also becoming involved in state legislation support.

Please let me know if you would like to join the internship program and get involved in the operation of our chapter.

### The Virus in Retreat

Following is a synopsis of an article that appeared in the N.Y. Times on February 11, 2021. According to the N.Y. Times, the pandemic is in retreat. On February 11, it reported that the number of new coronavirus cases continues to plummet, as does the number of hospitalizations. Deaths have also begun to decline. And the number of daily vaccinations has nearly tripled over the past month. The overall situation is still bad. The virus is spreading more rapidly in the U.S. than in almost any other large country, and more than 2,500 Americans are dying daily. Newly contagious variants may create future outbreaks. For now, though, things are getting better – and a combination of vaccinations, mask wearing, and social distancing has the potential to sustain the recent progress. Since reaching a peak on January 8 – related to holiday gatherings – the number of confirmed daily cases has fallen by almost 60 percent. The decline in actual cases is probably somewhat smaller, because the volume of testing has also fallen over the last few weeks. The percentage of positive tests has dropped to 7 percent from 14 percent on January 8. The number of hospitalizations is falling also. Most important, deaths have begun to decline. The fatality trends typically trail behind the trends in diagnosed cases by about three weeks. Dr. Ashish Jha, Dean of the Brown University School of Public Health predicts that the number of daily deaths will probably fall below 2,000 in about two weeks and could drop below 1,000 by next month. The main cause of the decline appears to be that a significant share of people now has at least some immunity to the virus. In the U.S., researchers say that about 110 million people have likely had the virus. Another 33 million have received at least one vaccine shot. Combined, these two groups make up about 43 percent of all Americans. Andrew Brouwer, a University of Michigan epidemiologist said that “we may be approaching herd protection”. This protection does not ensure a continuing decline in cases. Most Americans still haven’t had the virus. The Times said that we need to see whether Super Bowl parties turned into super spreader events that have caused new outbreaks. The next question is whether the recent decline causes Americans to become lax again, as happened both last summer and fall. Doing so in coming weeks would be especially dangerous because of the growing spread of more contagious virus variants. According to Apoorva Mandavilli, a Times science reporter, these contagious new variants really heighten the risks. Adding to the risk is the possibility that some people who have had the virus may be vulnerable to reinfection from one of the variants. The Times believes that the pandemic is in retreat. This does not mean that the pandemic is over. Many more Americans will become infected, hospitalized, and die. However, they believe that the worst may be over and that we may be beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel. What happens next will depend mostly on three factors: 1) How many Americans wear masks and remain socially distant; 2) How contagious the new variants are; and 3. How quickly the vaccines get into people’s arms.

### Coronavirus Update

More than 494,000 people have died in the U.S. from coronavirus and more than 2,915,000, cases have been reported as of February 20, 2021. The average seven-day death toll routinely topped 3,000 in January. But the number of new cases and hospitalizations began to fall in January and the pace of

vaccinations accelerated to more than a million shots a day as new more transmissible variants of the virus began to appear.

### Coronavirus cases in MD

MD - 375,156 cases, 7,677 deaths  
PG County - 71,846 cases, 1,303 deaths  
AA County - 34,978 cases, 518 deaths

At least 42.3 million people have received at least 1 dose of the vaccine in the U.S. and more than 17.1 million people have been fully vaccinated. 74.1 million doses have been distributed. Maryland has administered at least 709,862 first doses covering 24.1% of the prioritized population and 11.7% of the state’s population. At least 300,029 people have been fully vaccinated.

### COVID – 19 Vaccinations in MD

1st Dose by County of Vaccination	%Pop	2nd Dose Vaccination	%Pop	
MD	706,885	11.692	306,164	5.064
AA	64,218	11.087	28,911	4.991
PG	52,266	5.748	18,067	1.987

PG county has the largest number of coronavirus cases in MD but only 5.7% of its residents have received their first dose of coronavirus vaccine, the lowest in the state. The state is increasing its allotment of coronavirus vaccine to PG county to 4,200 doses a week. The state has opened a mass vaccination clinic at Six Flags America.

### Membership Renewal

On the Home Page of the NARFE website, there is a tab called Membership Renewal. If you click on the tab, it shows your national membership only and not your chapter affiliation. If you click on a related tab called My Profile, it shows your chapter affiliation. However, neither tab shows you how to renew your membership. If you wish to renew your membership, I recommend that you call NARFE headquarters at 800-456-8410 and request that they renew both your national and your chapter membership. The cost for national membership is \$48 and the cost for chapter membership is \$8 for a total of \$56/yr.

### Election of Officers

We are scheduled to have an election this May for chapter officers to serve a two-year term from 2021 to 2023. We are looking for candidates to serve in the following positions: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and Secretary. If you would like to serve in one of these positions, please submit your name to Evelyn Harris at [evelynharris1952@yahoo.com](mailto:evelynharris1952@yahoo.com) by April 30, 2021. Incumbents running for re-election should submit an E-mail naming the position that they are running for and indicate the years that they have been serving in this position. New candidates should name the position that they are running for and include a short statement indicating their interests and qualifications for the job including related experiences and job skills.

### Federal Legislation

On January 22, President Biden rescinded the previous administration’s Schedule F Executive Order, which created a new federal employment category that threatened to politicize federal jobs by stripping civil service protections from designated job categories. NARFE encourages members to contact their legislators through the Legislative Action Center to support the following legislation:

- Equal COLA Act: Rep. Gerry Connolly, D-VA, introduced legislation to provide FERS retirees with full cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), ensuring equal COLAs for all federal retirees.
- FAIR Act: This act proposes a 3.2 percent average federal pay increase for 2022 to increase federal pay and close the gap between public and private sector wages.
- USPS Fairness Act: This act would end the unprecedented requirement that the U.S. Postal Service fully pre-fund the future health insurance benefits of its

retirees. This provision, unique to the Postal Service, is a major factor behind the agency's recent financial losses.

- Repeal of WEP and GPO: Rep, Rodney Davis, R-IL reintroduced legislation to repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO). These provisions cut the Social Security Benefits of federal employees and their surviving spouses. The Social Security Fairness Act, H.R. 82, would fully repeal both provisions.

### NARFE Market Research

NARFE recently surveyed new members. They asked active employee members what they valued most about their NARFE membership experience. They asked why did they join NARFE. The top three answers were: To learn how to get the most out of my federal benefits, to support NARFE's advocacy efforts, and nearing retirement and want to learn more about the process. The top three responses far outscored all remaining options. They also asked what member resources they find most valuable. The top answers were: NARFE Magazine, Federal benefits articles and white papers, and Federal benefits webinars followed by Personalized answers to benefits questions and Discounts on travel, health services, insurance, etc., through the NARFE Perks program. We will use this information in our future recruitment efforts.

### STATE LEGISLATIVE Ed Bice

There is important news on our main target – the Itemized Deduction/Decoupling Bills. After receiving a request by letter from SLC Chair Paul Schwartz, Delegate William Wivell (R – District 2, Washington County) asked the Department of Legislative Services to reconsider the Fiscal Note for the bill. On Friday, February 5, Delegate Wivell introduced the Itemized Deductions bill for the 2021 session (this was the last day bills could be introduced in the House). The hearing for the bill, designated HB 1111, will be before the House Ways and Means Committee on February 25 at 1:30pm. We will testify and submit a written statement for the record. Bob Goldberg of the State Legislative Committee has prepared some letters for NARFE members to use through the NARFE website to write your Maryland Delegate and Senator to urge support of the bill.

Because HB 1111 was introduced only in the House, if the bill passes out of the full House, it will be assigned to the appropriate committee in the opposite chamber, in this case the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee. The SLC has also provided written statements of support for two other bills earlier this month. First, we supported HB 731 Telehealth Services - Expansion. This bill, and its companion Senate Bill, SB 567, will extend the emergency measures enacted in 2020 for telehealth access and coverage that are in place for the current COVID-19 public health emergency. Our statement noted our belief that telehealth is very important for all Marylanders in these times, and especially for seniors who want to maintain their independence and enjoy living at home longer. Telehealth offers an efficient means for seniors to age in place easier by making it simpler to conduct medical appointments without extensive travel. Second, we supported HB 733, the Retirement Tax Reduction Act (RTRA) of 2021, with companion cross- filed bill, SB 572. The RTRA would be a phased-in reduction in state tax on retirement income beginning in 2022 with full implementation in 2026. At that time, the bill will eliminate all state tax on the first \$50,000 of income for individual retirees with a Federal Adjusted Gross Income (FAGI) of up to \$100,000 so retirees with a FAGI of \$50,000 or less will pay no Maryland state tax whatsoever. In the intervening years, there will be phased-in tax reductions each year starting at \$10,000 and going up in \$10,000 increments each year to the full \$50,000 in 2026.

How will this help Maryland retirees? The answer is found in Governor Hogan's January 19, 2021 announcement of his FY 2022 Budget, which stated that "To address the state's sky-high retirement taxes, the governor's budget calls for a major \$1 billion tax cut for all Maryland retirees." In his 2021 State of the State address, Governor Hogan discussed the need for retiree tax relief by noting "lifelong Marylanders are moving to other states for one reason: our state's sky-high retirement taxes. We cannot let this keep happening. So once again, we

are proposing more than \$1 billion in tax cuts for every single retired Marylander, which will help keep tens of thousands of Marylanders from fleeing our state. Now more than ever, Marylanders need to be able to keep more of their hard-earned money in their own pockets." Our statement wholeheartedly supports the Governor's bill. See our 2021 Legislative Program pamphlet at our website at this address:

<https://mdnarfe.org/the-maryland-federation/committees/legislative-state/>

### MEMBERSHIP CHAIR - Lillie Watson

#### Chapter Activity Report 1/1/2021-2/10/2021

<b>491</b>	Chapter 1747 Members as of 2/10/21
<b>01</b>	New Chapter Members -Barbara McLaughlin
<b>04</b>	Members Dropped for Non-Renewal
<b>01</b>	Members Passed Away – Marie S. Locke
<b>09</b>	New Prospective Members
<b>11</b>	Members Renewed

### TREASURER REPORT - Vanessa Washington

Balance on: Dec 31, 2020	\$9,994.48
Income:	\$174.36
Expenses:	\$291.49
Balance on: Jan 31, 2020	\$9,877.35
Reserve for Alzheimer's Fund	\$302.00

### CHAPTER 1747 OFFICERS

Officer	Name	Contact #	Email
President	Frank Lee	410-672-5065	<a href="mailto:Fflee0716@verizon.net">Fflee0716@verizon.net</a>
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Treasurer	Vanessa Washington	240-334-7212	<a href="mailto:vwash411@comcast.net">vwash411@comcast.net</a>
Asst.Treasurer	Louise Cole	410-672-6528	<a href="mailto:Col9135@aol.com">Col9135@aol.com</a>
Secretary	Vacant	--	--
Committee Chairs			
Federal Legislation	Frank Lee	410-672-5065	<a href="mailto:Fflee0716@verizon.net">Fflee0716@verizon.net</a>
State Legislation	Edward Bice	301-464-3748	<a href="mailto:de3637@verizon.net">de3637@verizon.net</a>
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Alzheimer Chair	Edward Bice	301-464-3748	<a href="mailto:de3637@verizon.net">de3637@verizon.net</a>
NARFE/PAC Chair	Edward Bice	301-464-3748	<a href="mailto:de3637@verizon.net">de3637@verizon.net</a>
Network Coordinator	Bruce Thoman	--	<a href="mailto:thomanBruce@gmail.com">thomanBruce@gmail.com</a>
Social Media Coordinator	Charles Smith	301-502-3421	<a href="mailto:bigfoodnmd@yahoo.com">bigfoodnmd@yahoo.com</a>
Membership Chair	Lillie Watson	301-383-1597	<a href="mailto:Lwatson15@hotmail.com">Lwatson15@hotmail.com</a>
Service Officer	Rhonda Hackley	301-335-0493	<a href="mailto:rmhackley7168@gmail.com">rmhackley7168@gmail.com</a>

**STAY SAFE**  
**PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING**  
**AND**  
**REGISTER FOR THE VACCINE**

**If you are a senior and don't have a computer call 3-1-1**  
**If you have a computer – [Covidvax.maryland.gov](https://www.covidvax.maryland.gov)**

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