



NARFE NEWSLETTER

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

Volume 39 No. 8

Web: narfe.org/chapter1747
Facebook: NARFE Chapter 1747

April 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

- April 1** Executive Board Meeting, 10a Virtual Meeting Using Zoom
- April 8** CSRS Offset, 2p Federal Benefits Institute
- April 15** Aging in Place, 10a, Cary Hithon
Virtual Meeting Using Zoom
- May 6** Executive Board Meeting, 10a
Virtual Meeting Using Zoom
- May 20** Legislative Wrap-Up, 10a – MD legislators will discuss legislation passed by the General Assembly. Chapter members will vote for officers for the next two years.
Virtual Meeting Using Zoom

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Frank Lee

We need to resume our recruitment and retention efforts this Spring. We had good success in our recruitment efforts in 2019 and early 2020 which included participation in several health and community fairs and holding a NARFE Fair at the Bowie Senior Center in January 2020. These efforts were cut short by the pandemic related shutdown which occurred in March 2020. We need to resume our recruitment activities this Spring because we are continuing to lose members and our current members are getting older. We ended 2020 with just under 500 members and we had 28 members with expiring memberships at the end of February 2021. I sent an E-mail to those members urging them to renew their membership.

We plan to actively recruit this year to increase our membership and to become younger. Many of our current members are in their 70s and 80s and may retire soon. Our goal is to recruit active Federal employees eligible for retirement and recent retirees. We know that many Federal employees and retirees live in the Bowie-Crofton area. Our challenge is to reach out to them and get them to join

NARFE and Chapter 1747. We are planning to hold a virtual recruiting event this Spring. Congressman Anthony Brown will speak at the event. With his name recognition, I think that his presence will be a great way to promote the event. I have also invited speakers from NARFE to talk on the NARFE Advocacy program and on ways that NARFE can help members find answers to their Federal benefit questions. I have also invited a financial planner to talk on financial issues that new retirees have to address. We plan to promote the event through various means including:

- Bowie Senior Center Newsletter
- Coffee News
- Prince George Post Press Release
- Federal Health Plan representatives
- Events@baltimoresun.com
- Current Federal employees
- Libraries
- Chapter 1747 Facebook Group

Our current NARFE members have an important role to play in this effort. We will send you an E-mail with a flyer advertising the virtual fair together with a digital NARFE enrollment form. We know that many members have family or friends who are Federal employees or retirees. We want members to share the flyer and enrollment form with their family and friends to encourage them to find out about NARFE by attending the fair and by joining NARFE. If each member shares the material with at least two people, we can reach hundreds of Federal employees and retirees. We need the help of each member to promote the fair. We also intend to promote NARFE and Chapter 1747 through participation in health fairs and other events including Federal agency pre-retirement seminars. From our recent recruiting efforts, we have added dozens of new members and three of them have become officers in our chapter. We need to build on our past success and recruit new members to ensure that Chapter 1747 has a bright future.



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. Through this program, we have already found three new officers, Bruce Thoman our new Network Coordinator, Charles Smith our new Social Media Coordinator, and Angela Hyman, our new Membership Chair. Bruce has expanded and updated the list of members and other people who receive electronic copies of our monthly newsletter. Charles has created a Facebook page for our chapter and Angela will be collecting our monthly chapter statistics. Another member is 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.

Coronavirus Update

More than 546,000 people have died in the U.S. from coronavirus and more than 2,968,000, cases have been reported as of March 24, 2021. New infections continued to trend upwards in a majority of states due to the spread of new variants of the virus.

Coronavirus cases in MD

MD cases:	402,785	deaths:	8,214
PG cases:	76,779	deaths:	1,377
AA cases:	38,025	deaths:	559

At least 128 million people have received at least one dose of the vaccine in the U.S. and more than 43.8 million people have been fully vaccinated. 169.2 million doses have been distributed. Maryland has administered at least 1,632,393 first doses covering 33.6% of the prioritized population and 27% of the state's population. At least 816,155 people have been fully vaccinated.

COVID – 19 Vaccinations in MD

1st Dose by County of Vaccination	%Pop	2nd Dose Vaccination	%Pop	
MD	1,488,253	24.62	756,690	12.52
AA	138,095	23.84	71,708	12.38
PG	157,177	17.28	61,977	6.82

American Rescue Plan

The provisions of the \$1.9 trillion covid-19 relief bill just passed by Congress are exceedingly broad. Major provisions include:

- Unemployment benefits: Extends the \$300 weekly unemployment benefit through Sept. 6, as well as provide a tax break on \$10,000 in unemployment benefits.

- Stimulus checks: Sends \$1,400 stimulus checks on top of the \$600 payments issued through the stimulus bill passed in December. Individuals earning \$75,000 per year and couples earning \$150,000 would receive the full \$1,400 per person benefit.
- Child tax credit: Most Americans would receive \$3,000 a year for each child ages 6 to 17, and \$3,600 for each child under age 6. This provision would last 1 year.
- Aid to state and local governments: Designates \$350 billion for states, cities, tribal governments and U.S. territories. Facing deep budget shortfalls, state and local governments have shed 1.3 million jobs since the pandemic began last year. While tax revenues grew in some states, at least 26 states were hit with declines.
- Pandemic response: Tens of billions of dollars will fund coronavirus testing and contact tracing; increasing the size of the public health workforce and funding vaccine distribution and supply chains.
- Housing assistance: Sets aside more than \$20 billion in emergency rental assistance and other relief for the homeless. Another \$10 billion for mortgage and homeownership assistance.
- School support: Sets aside almost \$130 billion to help K-12 schools reopen. That money would go to improving ventilation systems, reducing class sizes, buying PPEs and implementing social distancing. Colleges and other higher education institutions would receive almost \$40 billion to help support financial aid grants to prevent hunger, homelessness or other challenges for students during the pandemic. Additional funds would go to child care providers and \$1 billion is set aside for the Head Start program.

Other provisions include:

- Provides \$510 million for the FEMA Emergency Food and Shelter Program.
- Expands the Employee Retention Tax Credit for start-up companies and other businesses impacted by the pandemic.
- Increases the value of the federal COBRA health insurance program from 85% to 100%.
- Adds a \$10 billion infrastructure program to help local governments continue crucial capital projects.
- Makes all coronavirus related student loan relief tax free.
- Increases the total amount of Amtrak relief funding by \$200 million.
- Increases education funds by setting aside \$1.25 billion for summer enrichment; \$1.25 billion for after school programs and \$3 billion for education technology.
- Adds 8.5 billion in funds for the Provider Relief Program to assist rural health care providers.

The American Rescue Plan assumes that almost everyone can use a helping hand. Roughly 85 percent of adults and children will receive a stimulus payment. President Biden said "a typical family of four earning about \$110,000 will get checks for \$5,600. The yearlong expansion of the earned income tax credit will significantly reduce child poverty, and the additional child tax credit will impact more than 90% of households with children under the age of 17. According to the Center on Poverty and Social Policy at Columbia University, the covid-19 package is expected to cut overall poverty by about one third and child poverty roughly in half. The Plan sets aside \$39 billion to support child care facilities. Olivia Golden of the Center for Law and Social Policy calls the plan "the biggest investment in child care since World War II". For those receiving their health insurance through a federal exchange, subsidies are increased for two years and premium payments are capped at 8.5% of household income. The Plan provides aid to a large group of Americans in various ways. A proposed amendment to increase the minimum wage to \$15 was not included.

45th Biennial Conference

The MD NARFE Federation has announced plans to hold its 45th Biennial Conference at the Dunes Manor Hotel in Ocean City, MD from Sunday, May 2 to Tuesday, May 4. Registrations for the conference and the hotel are due on April 4. The cost is \$55 for the registration which includes breakfast and lunch on Monday and Tuesday, \$45 for the Installation Banquet on Monday night and a discounted rate for the hotel of \$101.66 per night. Speakers for the conference will include NARFE President Ken Thomas, and MD

Secretary of Aging Rona Kramer. It is a wonderful opportunity to hear some excellent speakers, meet the Federation's officers, see our Federation at work and get to relax in Ocean City for a couple of days. Please register through me by April 4 and make your registration and banquet checks out to the MD Federation of NARFE. You should call the hotel at 800-523-2888 to make your hotel reservations. I hope that you can join us at the conference. Please notify me by April 4 if you would like to attend the conference.

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 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.

Passing of Longtime Members

We received news that a couple of our longtime members have died. His wife Fran reported that Ted Catterton died late last year. Ed Bice reported that Calvin Dorn died in March 2021. His wife Virginia died last year. They were all longtime members of NARFE and Chapter 1747. Calvin was one of the original founders of Chapter 1747. May they all rest in peace.

STATE LEGISLATIVE Ed Bice

HB 1111- Income Tax Itemized Deduction This bill sponsored by Del. Wivell (R) District 2 was heard on February 25 in the House Ways and Means Committee. This bill advocates a decoupling of federal and state income tax returns so that MD taxpayers would be able to avail themselves of the federal standard deduction even if they choose to itemize on their state returns. This year we were joined by AARP and United Seniors of Maryland (USM) in support of the bill. At this time no vote by the committee has taken place.

SB 572 and HB 733- Retirement Tax Reduction Act 2021 These bills by the Hogan Administration were heard in March in the Senate Budget and Tax Committee and House Ways and Means committee. These bills would make retirement income in steps below \$50,000 non-taxable on Maryland state income tax returns. At this time no votes by the committees have taken place. While we do not expect these bills to pass, we provided testimony to make it clear that NARFE supports these efforts. We will continue to support any effort that will allow more seniors to age in place in Maryland.

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR Angela Hyman

Chapter Activity Report 2/1/2021-2/28/2021

486 Chapter 1747 Members as of 2/28/21
04 New Chapter Members – Rosemary Hill, Cassandra Miles Rhaney, Roger Owens, Patricia Smith
06 Members Dropped for Non-Renewal
01 Members Passed Away – Calvin Dorn
02 New Prospective Members
11 Members Renewed

TREASURERS REPORT Vanessa Washington

Balance on: Jan 31, 2021	\$9,877.35
Income:	\$0.36
Expenses:	\$599.32
Balance on: Feb 28, 2021	\$9,278.39
Reserve for Alzheimer's Fund	\$0.00



CHAPTER 1747 OFFICERS

Officer	Name	Contact #	Email
President	Frank Lee	410-672-5065	Flllee0716@verizon.net
Vice President	Kent Nilsson	301-613-9868	Kentnilsson@hue.com
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Asst. Treasurer	Louise Cole	410-672-6528	CoI9135@aol.com
Secretary	Vacant	--	--
Committee Chairs			
Federal Legislation	Frank Lee	410-672-5065	Flllee0716@verizon.net
State Legislation	Edward Bice	301-464-3748	de3637@verizon.net
Chapter Editor	Vanessa Washington	301-883-4904	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	301-502-3421	bigfoodnmd@yahoo.com
Membership Chair	Angela Hyman	--	bxflowers@verizon.com.
Service Officer	Rhonda Hackley	301-335-0493	rmhackley7168@gmal.com