



NARFE NEWSLETTER

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

Volume 39 No. 10

Web: narfe.org/chapter1747

June 2021

Facebook: NARFE Chapter 1747

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

- June 3** Executive Board Meeting, 10am
Virtual Meeting Using Zoom
- June 5** NARFE Fair, Virtual Meeting Using Zoom
- June 8** Financial Strategies for Mid-Career
Federal Employees, 2pm
Federal Benefits Institute Webinar
- June 17** Annual Social Event – Ledo Pizza Restaurant,
Crofton, MD, 11:30a - Chapter officers will be sworn in.
- Aug 5** Executive Board Meeting, 10am
Virtual Meeting Using Zoom

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Frank Lee

There is much good news. The spread of the virus has slowed. More people have been vaccinated. The economy is recovering. Coronavirus restrictions are being lifted. People are beginning to return to normal and President Biden has introduced a plan to improve both our physical and social infrastructure.

We must improve our physical infrastructure which routinely receives borderline failing grades from the American Society of Civil Engineers. These problems have been neglected for too long and must be addressed to move the country forward. Republican Senator Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia has presented a \$568 billion counterproposal to the President's \$2.3 trillion plan. Biden has proposed financing the plan by chiefly raising taxes on corporations. The President's plan would raise the corporate tax rate which currently is 21% to 28% which would still be smaller than the rate before Trump's tax cuts which was 35%. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell has said that Republicans are not going to support any infrastructure bill that includes changes to the 2017

tax law. Senate Republicans agree on the need to improve our infrastructure. However, they can't agree on the size or content of the plan that they can support or on a plan to pay for the improvements.

Senator Capito's plan talked about using user fees to pay for the improvements. Senator Capito's state of West Virginia ranks among the worst states nationally for infrastructure, according to a report from the American Society of Civil Engineers. More than 1,500 bridges in West Virginia are structurally deficient. The state's water pollution counts among the worst in the country, and its dams are increasingly reaching the end of their planned lives. Rodney Holbert, an engineer who helped prepare the study, estimates that West Virginia needs more than \$5 billion to address some of its immediate needs.

Improvements to our infrastructure have major national defense implications. We must improve the protection of our infrastructure to prevent hackers from disrupting or shutting down the infrastructure by disabling computer systems managing the infrastructure. We are witnessing the impact of disruption to oil deliveries to the east coast through the hacking of a computer system managing an oil pipeline. Recently, the state of Texas was shut down for a week when its electricity grid was down due to extreme weather conditions. Military officials have said that future conflicts may be fought in cyberspace and space rather than on conventional battlefields. A nation may be able to defeat another nation by disrupting its computer networks or by shooting down satellites controlling its GPS systems. We must improve our infrastructure to address these risks.

The bottom line is that Republicans in Congress don't want to pay for improving our infrastructure. Raising the corporate tax rate from 21% to 28% is a reasonable way to pay for the improvements and the President's infrastructure plan has broad support across the country. In addition, infrastructure development will provide employment opportunities for many Americans and contribute to our economic growth which will help pay for their cost.

The question is whether the nation is willing to face the truth and address its ongoing infrastructure problems. The problems will not go away by themselves. Delays in addressing them will only increase their costs.

The country must address new threats to its democratic institutions. Congressional Republicans have gone all out in supporting the former President's Big Lie that he won the 2020 presidential election and that the election was stolen from him. They removed Liz Cheney from her House leadership position because she opposed the former president's Big Lie. The Republican strategy to win the 2022 elections apparently is to promote the Big Lie to Republican voters and to suppress the vote from non-Republicans. Republican legislatures in more than 30 states have passed laws to make it harder to vote, particularly to cast mail-in ballots. In one state, they made it illegal to provide water to persons waiting in line to vote. In others, they removed drop

boxes from being used and shortened voting hours. Some states also adopted tougher voter identification requirements. The goal is to win elections by preventing the opposition from voting. If we allow these practices to prevail, election outcomes may be pre-determined and fair and free elections may become history. We must prevent these attempts to suppress voting through congressional action and the courts.

President Biden's prediction has come true. He said at his inauguration 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 all have work to do to promote good government and to defend our democratic institutions.

We must ensure that the truth overcomes lies and defend our hard earned right to vote. And we must work to ensure that love overcomes hate. We must continue to defend our democracy.

May 20 General Meeting

We had a very successful meeting on May 20. We held a successful election to elect chapter officers for another two years and had a stimulating discussion on issues that were voted on at the recent session of the MD General Assembly with three members of the MD General Assembly including Senator J.J. Douglas Peters and Delegates Geraldine Valentino-Smith and Sid Saab. We had a total of 22 attendees at the meeting.

Election of Officers

We held an election of Chapter 1747 officers at our May 20 General Meeting. The following officers were re-elected to office, Frank Lee, President, Vanessa Washington, Treasurer, and Louise Cole, Assistant Treasurer. Diane Henry was elected to be our new Vice President. All of the officers were elected by unanimous vote and there was no candidate for the position of Secretary. The new officers will be sworn in to their positions at our June 17 Luncheon by our Region 2 President, Gary Roundtree.

June Luncheon

Great news! We were able to book our June Luncheon at the Ledo Pizza restaurant in Crofton for Thursday, June 17. Please join us for this exciting event. This will be an opportunity for you to reunite with people whom you have not seen since last year due to the pandemic. It will also be an opportunity to congratulate our new officers who were elected in May. Since we have all been vaccinated, we should be safe. The cost is only \$10 per person. Reserve your space by completing and mailing in the form on the last page of newsletter. We look forward to seeing you on June 17.

NARFE 45th Biennial Conference

Louise Cole and I, together with my wife Ellen attended the MD Federation of NARFE's 45th Biennial Conference held in Ocean City, MD on May 2-4, 2021. We heard a number of excellent speakers including our NARFE National President, Ken Thomas, Gregory Slater, the MD Secretary of Transportation, Rona Kramer, the MD Secretary of Aging, William Smith, Chair, Judiciary Committee, MD Senate, and Sheree Sample-Hughes, Speaker Pro Tem of the MD General Assembly. Mr. Thomas spoke about the success of NARFE in defending the pay and benefits of Federal employees and retirees for 100 years, and federal legislation that NARFE is currently supporting including efforts to eliminate or reduce the impact of WEP (Windfall Elimination Provision), legislation to create equal COLAs for both CSRS and FERS employees, and legislation to provide Federal employees a 3.2% increase in pay for 2022.

Ms. Kramer spoke on a new program for seniors available in selected MD counties including AA county to provide aging in place services to seniors including transportation, home maintenance, and navigation (referral) services for a monthly fee. See <https://partnersincare.org/community-for-life> for program details

Mr. Slater and Ms. Sample-Hughes both spoke about the importance of expanding high speed broadband in the President's infrastructure plan. Mr. Smith spoke on the Police Reform Bill just passed by the MD General Assembly. We were encouraged to hear about efforts to expand and improve government services.



Swearing in of MD Federation Officers by Dr. Gary Roundtree: Virginia Bender, Dr. Sudha Haley, Larry Walton, and Ed Holland



Acknowledgements of Individual Contributions to the MD Federation

NARFE Fair

We commend your longevity and loyalty to NARFE and Chapter 1747 and hope that you will continue to be an active member in Chapter 1747, but the time has come for us to grow the chapter and make it younger to ensure its continuation into the future. Please help us recruit new members for NARFE and Chapter 1747 by helping us identify potential members for NARFE so that we can invite them to the NARFE Fair. We have simplified the process for you to identify potential NARFE fair attendees for us and for those individuals to register for the NARFE Fair on June 5. Just send me the names and E-mail addresses of family and friends who are Federal employees or retirees and we will send them a NARFE Fair flyer and link to the NARFE fair. You won't have to contact your family and friends who are Federal employees or retirees and they won't have to take any action to register for the NARFE Fair. We will automatically register them for the fair and follow-up with those who attend the fair. Thanks for your help in identifying potential NARFE members for us so that we can invite them to the fair. Congressman Anthony Brown will speak at the fair and NARFE representatives will talk on the many benefits of belonging to NARFE. Thanks for your help in making the NARFE Fair a great success.

Legislation Supported by NARFE

Reform of the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), H.R. 2337 WEP significantly reduces the earned Social Security benefits of retirees who also collect a pension from their civil service employment.

USPS Fairness Act, H.R. 695/S 145 - End the unfair requirement that the U.S. Postal Service fully pre-fund the future health benefits of its retirees.

Equal COLA Act, H.R. 304 - Provide FERS retirees with full cost of living adjustments.

Repeal the WEP and GPO, H.R. 82 - Repeal both the WEP (Windfall Elimination Provision) and the GPO (Government Pension Offset)

Support the FAIR Act, H.R. 392 and S. 561 - Provide Federal employees with an average 3.2% pay raise for 2022.

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Coronavirus Update

More than 587,000 people have died in the U.S. from coronavirus and more than 33,039,000 cases have been reported as of May 21, 2021. All adults in the U.S. are now eligible for a coronavirus vaccine.

Coronavirus cases in MD

MD cases:	457,527	deaths:	8,782
PG cases:	84,689	deaths:	1,463
AA cases:	43,590	deaths:	599

COVID – 19 Vaccinations in MD

	1st Dose by County of Vaccination	%Pop	2nd Dose Vaccination	%Pop
MD	3,094,723	51.19	2,490,814	41.2
AA	279,941	48.33	220,520	38.07
PG	373,011	41.02	294,092	32.34

Electronic Copy of the Newsletter

Some of our members have elected to receive electronic copies of our newsletter. They receive a monthly E-mail with a link to the newsletter which they can print on their computer. The advantages of receiving an electronic copy of the newsletter are that you would receive the newsletter three days sooner and the chapter would not have to pay for printing and mailing a copy of the newsletter to you. Please send me an E-mail if you would like to receive electronic copies of the newsletter beginning in September. You do not need to take any action if you would like to continue receiving hard copy newsletters.

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR Angela Hyman

Chapter Activity Report 4/1/2021-4/30/2021

474	Chapter 1747 Members as of 4/30/21
01	New Chapter Members – Michele Bellamy
03	Members Dropped for Non-Renewal
02	Members Passed – Richard K. Johnson; Steve Young
17	New Prospective Members
08	Members Renewed

STATE LEGISLATION Ed Bice

Police reform was one of the major focal points in the 2021 legislative session. The sponsors' goals throughout the deliberation was to restore trust, transparency, and accountability in the police for all Marylanders. This was a contentious legislative session with bipartisan opposition to the following bills that were passed.

- Increase body-worn cameras, establish a use of force policy, and provide mental health supports for officers (SB71);
- Create transparency in the disciplinary process and curtail no-knock warrants (SB178);
- Demilitarize the police and independently investigate police-involved deaths (SB600);
- Ensure local control of the Baltimore City Police Department (SB786); and
- Repeal and replace the Law Enforcement Officer's Bill of Rights, and create a Law Enforcement Scholarship Program (HB670).

It must be noted that in Baltimore City there have been 17% more homicides in 2021 as compared to 2020. There were 100 homicides recorded as of April 30, 2021. The question is, will the package of bills that passed do anything to make Maryland safer and will they make it more difficult to hire and retain good law enforcement officers.

TREASURERS REPORT Vanessa Washington

Balance on: Mar 31, 2021	\$9,280.82
Income:	\$445.76
Expenses:	\$658.18
Balance on: Apr 30, 2021	\$9,068.40
Useable Balance on Apr 30, 2021	\$8,923.40
Reserve for Alzheimer's Fund	\$45.00
Reserve for Advertisement	\$100.00

CHAPTER 1747 OFFICERS

Officer	Name	Contact #	Email
President	Frank Lee	410-672-5065	Flee0716@verizon.net
Vice President	Kent Nilsson	301-613-9868	Kentnilsson@hue.com
Treasurer	Vanessa Washington	240-334-7212	vwash411@comcast.net
Asst. Treasurer	Louise Cole	410-672-6528	Col9135@aol.com
Secretary	Vacant	--	--
Committee Chairs			
Federal Legislation	Frank Lee	410-672-5065	Flee0716@verizon.net
State Legislation	Edward Bice	301-464-3748	de3637@verizon.net
Chapter Editor	Vanessa Washington	240-334-7212	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.net
Service Officer	Rhonda Hackley	301-335-0493	rmhackley7168@gmail.com

Reservation Form

NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

(NARFE CHAPTER 1747 - June 2021 luncheon)

LEDO'S PIZZA LOCATION: 1286 MD-3, Crofton, MD 21114

Date: June 17, 2021 TIME: 11:30A-2:00P

Price: \$10.00 includes: a selection of pizzas, tossed salad, chicken fingers, fries & a non-alcoholic beverage.

Space is limited, so reserve your space today by completing the form below and returning by mail.

Name: _____

Telephone: _____ **Address:** _____

Email _____

Number of Attendees _____ **Amount PAID (\$10 X #ATTENDEES)** _____

Name of Guest(s): _____

Mail this form with your check to: NARFE Chapter 1747, P.O. Box 504, Bowie, MD 20718. Make checks payable to NARFE Chapter 1747. All payments are due by June 11, 2021