

# National Active and Retired Federal Employees LA CROSSE – CHAPTER 370 – NEWSLETTER

December, 2017



**National Headquarters:** 703-838-7760  
**Legislative Hotline:** 877-217-8234  
**Wisconsin President:** Greg Habeck 920-371-9050  
**Chapter 370 President:** Terry Loper 608-269-4428  
**Vice President:** Vacant  
**Secretary:** Dolores Barker 608-399-1408  
**Treasurer:** Jan Stacey 608-486-4900  
**Newsletter:** Maripat Willis 608-457-2914  
**Sunshine:** Joyce Weise 608-519-3319  
**Legislation:** Emeron Christensen 608-779-0488  
**Membership:** Maripat Willis 608-457-2914  
**Service Officer:** vacant  
**Alzheimer Representative:** Joyce Weise 608-519-

## OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

**Governor Scott Walker** 115 East State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53702 PO Box 7863  
Phone 608-266-1212 Fax 608-267-8983  
Email: govgeneral@wisconsin.gov  
[www.wisgov.state.wi.us/](http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/)

**Lt. Governor, Rebecca Kleefisch;** Rm 19, East State  
Capital; Madison, WI 53702 PO Box 2043  
Phone 608-266-3516; Fax 608-267-3571  
Email: ltgov@wisconsin.gov  
<http://ltgov.wisconsin.gov>

**Senator Ron Johnson** 328 Hart Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510  
Phone 202-224-5323; Fax 202-224-2725  
Email: ron\_johnson@ronjohnson.senate.gov  
<http://www.johnson.senate.gov>

**Senator Tammy Baldwin** 1 Russell Courtyard  
Washington, DC 20510  
Phone 202-224-5653; Fax 202-224-9787  
Email: Tammy\_\_baldwin@baldwin.senate.gov  
<http://www.baldwin.senate.gov>

**Congressman Ron Kind** 1406 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515 Phone 20211-225-5506  
Local Pho 782-2558; Fax 202-225-5739;  
Email: ronkind@mail.house.gov  
<http://www.kind.house.gov/>

**95<sup>th</sup> Assembly District Representative Jill Billings**  
Rm. 4 West State Capital PO Box 8952  
Madison, WI 53708  
Phone 608-266-5780  
Email: rep.billings@legis.wisconsin.gov

**94<sup>th</sup> Assembly District Representative, Steve Doyle**  
Rm. 126 North State Capital  
PO Box 8952; Madison, WI 53708  
Phone 608-266-0631 Fax 608-282-3694  
Email: rep.doyle@legis.wi.gov  
<http://doyle.assembly.wi.gov>

**State Senator Jennifer Shilling**  
State Capitol 106 South; PO Box 7882  
Madison, WI 53707  
Phone 608-266-5490; 800-385-3385; Local Phone 788-9854  
Email: sen.shilling@legis.wi.gov

## WINTER.....COMING SOON?

I just turned the calendar page to December. Can that be? Our Wisconsin weather has been amazing. I certainly have enjoyed these bonus fall days and I suspect you all have too. I know they had started making snow at Mt. La Crosse early November and are surely gearing up to start again. Yes, the winter sports fans are eager to see weather back to being normal again.

For those who have not been able to attend our NARFE chapter meetings for a while, we miss you. We have had some good discussion on actions and debates going on in Congress that could affect our federal annuities. Please take note of articles later in this newsletter.

At our November meeting we voted to make gifts of \$50 each to two local groups. The first one, New Horizons, which provides support to battered women and their children in our community. The second, Mississippi Valley Conservancy, who spoke to our group. They work to preserve this beautiful area we live in. Two worthy organizations.

As you know, normally we have our monthly meetings at Perkins restaurant in Onalaska. This year we have been invited to Char Lebakken's home. Char loves to decorate for the holidays and we thank her for opening her home for us to celebrate the season together. **Details on the next page.**

**NARFE CHRISTMAS PARTY**  
**December 13**  
**11:30 - Social**  
**Noon – Lunch**  
**Char Lebakken's home**

*Merry Christmas and a  
Happy New Year*

## **NARFE CHRISTMAS PARTY**

As mentioned on the front page, our Christmas party will be held at Char Lebakken's home this year. We will meet at 11:30 for social time and eat our meal at Noon.

Char will be doing the main course and we will supplement the main course with salad/side dish or dessert. At our last meeting a sign-up sheet went around and those who signed up are bringing the following:

Sandy Hanson – Asian salad	Maripat Willis – Broccoli/Cauliflower hotdish
Pam Jeffers – Risotto	Dolores Barker – Dessert
Kathy Humbel – Pumpkin pie	Nancy Loper – Dessert
Joyce Weise – Sandbakkels	
Jan Stacey – Waldorf Salad	

It looks like we have a nice assortment so far. If you are able to join us, feel free to bring anything to your liking.

**We would like a head count for seating so an RSVP would be helpful. Call Char at 788-1868 or Maripat at 317-8862.**

We will be doing a food box for WAFER again this year. Bring a non-perishable food item, if you would like.

Directions to Char Lebakken's:

Going south through La Crosse on Mormon Coulee Rd. (Hwy. 35-14)

Turn left on Hwy. 14. Go approximately 3 miles. Turn right on Bloomer Mill Rd.

Charlie's Inn is on left where you turn. Travel several blocks and turn Left on Mormon Dr. Destination is First house (1163) on right.

## **HEARING AIDS – More affordable and possibly Free**

Good hearing health is important to your overall well-being. Studies have shown that people who address their hearing loss have improved long-term health and report higher levels of happiness and satisfaction with their lives.

I had my hearing checked about a year ago and was told there was significant loss in one ear. I received some literature in the mail a few months ago from NARFE with an exclusive offer on hearing aids. I saved it as it seemed worth checking out. It looks like many of our federal insurance plans have an generous allowance available. Check out our NARFE magazine as there are companies advertising their products.

## **OPEN SEASON – THERE IS STILL TIME**

'Tis the season for federal employees and retirees to think about their health insurance needs for 2018 under the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program and their potential dental or vision needs under the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program. Open Season is from November 13 through December 11. Your December issue of NARFE will help you review and make an informed decision. As we are all aware, our insurance premiums are up for 2018 an average of 6%, but we can be grateful for good coverage.

**I am sure we have all read and heard on television the "Breaking News" on the material found on next page. It is time to act. When we contact our legislator, we do make a difference! Your help is needed!!**

This is a very important time to make our voices heard. Call, write, use your computer. **Contact your legislators NOW!**  
Urge them to reject any attempts to cut or reduce the earned pay and benefits of the federal community.

### **WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

For those who have access to the computer, go the NARFE Website – Go to Legislation – Go to Take Action. It is easy to follow! We must ask our legislators to reject changes to our COLA and reject the cuts aimed at the federal community.

No computer? Your legislators are listed on the first page of this newsletter.

### **REPUBLICAN TAX BILL**

**Washington (CNN)**As you know, Republicans passed their tax bill in [the wee hours of Saturday morning](#), marking a significant triumph for a body that failed last time around to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

But Republicans held back from celebrating too much Saturday both because it was 2 a.m. and because everyone acknowledged there are still plenty of obstacles ahead.

Welcome to a rare process in the US Congress: a real, live conference committee.

### **Key differences between House and Senate**

A conference is intended to help Republicans in the House and Senate sort out their differences. And there are plenty.

- The Senate bill sunsets tax breaks for individuals in 2025, something it did to save money so their bill would meet reconciliation rules. The House bill makes its individual tax cuts permanent. The corporate rate, meanwhile, would be permanent in both bills.
- Speaking of the corporate tax rate. The Senate bill enacts its 20% corporate rate in 2019. The House bill enacts its 20% corporate rate right away in 2018.
- The Senate bill repeals Obamacare's individual mandate. The House bill does not.
- The Senate bill doubles the exemption on the estate tax so that you could pass down up to \$11 million tax free, but the House bill entirely repeals the estate tax in 2024 so you could pass down any amount of money tax free.
- The Senate bill maintains the current mortgage interest deduction of \$1 million. The House bill cut it in half to \$500,000
- The House bill repealed the alternative minimum tax. The Senate bill maintained it.
- The Senate bill has seven tax brackets and they lowered the top rate. The House has four and they maintained the top rate.
- There are major differences between how the Senate and House structure taxes for so-called pass-through businesses. It's a bit complicated, but just know that it could be a major sticking point. It already was in both chambers.

There are even more than that, but those are the biggies.

### **LOOMING GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN**

Republicans are moving toward passing a stopgap measure to avoid a looming government shutdown, but the path is treacherous, with obstacles on both sides of the aisle as lawmakers push their own priorities, some unrelated to government spending.

With government funding set to expire at the end of Friday, December 8, Republicans are aiming to buy more time so they can negotiate over a long-term spending package. The task is complicated by a feud

between President Trump and Democrats, whose votes Republicans need to secure passage, and measures on the politically fraught issues of immigration and the Affordable Care Act.

The possibility of a shutdown looms just after [Senate Republicans succeeded in passing their sweeping tax overhaul](#), a moment of triumph for a party that has struggled to produce big achievements despite controlling Congress and the White House. But promises made to secure passage of the tax bill could further complicate negotiations on government funding, and any failure at the fundamental task of keeping the government running would swiftly undercut Republicans' display of progress.

[The threat of a shutdown escalated last week](#) after President Trump fired off a Twitter post attacking the top Democrats in Congress, who in turn pulled out of a planned White House meeting, deepening the rift between the parties at a time when they are already at odds over issues like taxes, health care and immigration.

Republicans' stopgap spending measure would extend government funding through Dec. 22.

### **CHRISTMAS QUOTES**

*My brothers and sisters, may the spirit of love which comes at Christmastime fill our homes and our lives and linger there long after the tree is down and the lights are put away for another year.*

*Thomas S. Monson*

*I stopped believing in Santa Claus when I was six. Mother took me to see him in a department store and he asked for my autograph.*

*Shirley Temple*

*After church on the Sunday after Thanksgiving, my family would go chop down our Christmas tree. Once it was home and placed in its stand, Mom and I would painstakingly decorate our tree. It took hours to place the tinsel, string the lights, find the perfect spot for my favorite macaroni and felt ornaments from kindergarten.*

*Molly O'Keefe*

*I wrapped my Christmas presents early this year, but I used the wrong paper. See, the paper I used said 'Happy Birthday' on it. I didn't want to waste it so I just wrote 'Jesus' on it.*

*Demetri Martin*

*I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. Charles Dickens*

*Our many different cultures notwithstanding, there's something about the holidays that makes the planet communal. Even nations that do not celebrate Christmas can't help but be caught up in the collective spirit of their neighbors, as twinkling lights dot the landscape and carols fill the air. It's an inspiring time of the year.*

*Marlo Thomas*