

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

April, 2018



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## HERE COMES SPRING?

I hope you have not put your snow shovels away. Mother nature seems to not want to let go of winter yet. Yes, we are all anxious for Spring, but we do live in Wisconsin. Our weather is far better than what they are dealing with on the Eastern coast.

If you have not been to a NARFE chapter meeting lately, I encourage you to join us. We try to have a speaker at some meetings with pertinent information for our “senior” age group. The La Crosse area has a good speaker base to choose from. Dolores Barker, our Secretary, is always looking for leads on who to contact. (Her phone # is on the list to your left.) There is always discussion on issues at the national level (Washington) that can affect our wellbeing – our annuities and health insurance, for example. Our Legislative chairman, Emeron Christensen, does a good job of bringing us the latest news. It’s quiet now in Washington but will be busy in the months ahead.

Our next meeting is **April 11** at 11:30 (lunch at noon). We are meeting at Perkins in Onalaska on Hwy. 16, just north of the Mall. We have a room reserved in the back of the restaurant.

On **May 9<sup>th</sup>** we will be having Denece Ellis at our meeting. She will be giving us information about Medicare Reimbursement Accounts.

**June 13<sup>th</sup>** will be our Annual Picnic. It will be held again this year at the Stoddard Park shelter. There will be a potluck and a little Bingo for your entertainment after we eat. There will be more information in the next newsletter. It’s a pretty drive down the river. Hope you can join us.

*When Spring finally comes.....  
Stop and smell the.....*

# FLOWERS

## **THOUGHTS Gleaned from the NARFE Wisconsin Federation Newsletter**

We have entered into a new time for NARFE. There have been many changes in the past year and a half. Belonging to a local Chapter is now optional. This was voted on at the National Convention in 2016. The result was major changes in Chapter structure and membership. Chapters lost around 25% of their members who renewed their membership in the “National Division” because they did not check the correct box when renewing and omitted the Chapter dues of \$6 to \$12. (La Crosse dues are \$10). Joining a Local Chapter is poorly explained on the application form in the NARFE magazine. They give you a phone # to call and learn more about a NARFE chapter in your area.

Barbara Sido, our new NARFE Executive Director, describes what she calls the “NARFE NEXT” initiative. Drawn from discussions in Chapter and Federation meetings with Members across the country, she sees that the ‘grass roots’ of our organization starts at the local level. Yes!! The local chapter is where ‘grass roots’ begin – where ideas and actions regarding NARFE and what it stands for and where the advocacy work really begins. We know the importance of being a member of NARFE, but local chapters will find it harder to keep our structure strong when our membership shrinks. Chapters are a place to learn about NARFE and grow into good advocates. This new structural change does not make it easy.

## **ELECTIONS IN WISCONSIN**

I hope you were able to get out and vote in the Non-partisan Election for Supreme Court judge held on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Some of our Supreme Court judges have a way of getting into the news, and not always in a good way. Some judges have actually done some dis-honorable things. We need to make note of those bad actors so we don’t elect or re-elect them.

I have a real problem with some of the decisions being made that are not in the best interests of the people of Wisconsin and our environment. It doesn’t take a law degree to figure out who the bad actors are. Please keep good notes for those so-called non-partisan elections coming up in the future.

See [www.wicourts.gov](http://www.wicourts.gov) and keep informed.

Emeron Christensen  
Legislation Chairman

“In addition to the April 3<sup>rd</sup> election, there will be a special election in June to fill two legislative seats that have been left vacant by Gov. Walker since 2017. (This election does not immediately affect our area.) While Republicans had tried to block these elections and prevent over 200,000 voters from going to the polls, intense public backlash and three separate court rulings ultimately forced Gov. Walker to obey the law and grant voters their constitutional right to representation.”

*From Capital Update – Under the Dome March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018*

## **WASHINGTON POST LEGISLATIVE TIDBITS**

A big \$1.3 trillion Fiscal Year spending Bill was passed last month without a fight so our representatives could get out of town before the kids arrived for the march against guns. We are now nearing the halfway mark in the FY which leaves the funding management headaches for everybody else in government to resolve before October 1.

The White House FY 2019 proposed budget cuts 2/3 of the departments and shows increases for the remaining 1/3, revealing where the priorities are. Major cuts are included for Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP (formerly food stamps), and other social programs. The funding cuts are used to partially fund additional defense spending, border wall and infrastructure. This budget assumes higher economic growth (more revenue) than most forecasters do. It also proposes cuts for federal employees and retirees pay and benefits using the usual claw backs. I sum this up with one word, that being chiseling. Thank goodness this budget is assumed to be dead on arrival. It is the same old fight in a different year, however do not let your guard down. A side note, it does not address the deficit. Little regard is evident for fiscal responsibility.

Economic growth can be confusing these days. Larry Kudlow, long time CNBC economic news person, has been selected to join the WH staff. He favors tax cuts but not tariffs. Tariffs are the latest club now being used to get even with the monkey business in world trade. It is safe to say “who knows”, even the stock market seems confused.

Emeron Christensen  
Legislative Chairman

## **New Medicare Cards are Coming**

Medicare will mail new Medicare cards between April 2018 and April 2019. Your new card will have a new Medicare # that's unique to you, instead of your Social Security #. This will help protect your identity.

Things to know about your new Medicare card

- You don't need to take any action to get your new Medicare card.
- The new card won't change your Medicare coverage or benefits.
- Medicare will never ask you to give us personal or private information to get your new Medicare # and card.
- There's no charge for your new card.

### ***Watch out for Scams....***

***If someone calls you and asks for your Medicare # or other personal information, hang up and call us at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).***

## **RELAX AND FEEL RE-ENERGIZED THIS SPRING!**

April is National Stress Awareness Month

Stress is part of all of our lives. A little bit keeps us on our toes and can help us perform to the best of our abilities. Those who are caregivers often have more stress than is manageable and that stress can be overwhelming and cause health concerns. We've all heard of the benefits of reducing stress to improve our health and "add years to our lives". We know we "should" do it, but how can we realistically manage stress with our busy lifestyles?

Taking time for yourself may help you and give you more energy and patience to deal with all that life throws your way. Here are a few examples of what you can do when you feel stressed. Try fitting some into your daily routine:

*Breathe Deeply....Make a conscious effort to deepen your breaths by "breathing with your belly."*

*Listen to Soothing Music.....It works!*

*Have a Massage or Back Rub.....What a treat.*

*Maintain a Healthy Diet....Lots of fruits, veggies and whole grains give us energy and keep our body fueled.*

*Eliminate some of those foods that can increase our feelings of stress.*

*Get Regular Exercise.....Sometimes a daily walk can leave you feeling more energetic.*

*Stay Connected.....Stay in touch with friends and family.*

*Enjoy a hobby....Take time for something you really love to do.*

Relaxing needn't be complicated or expensive, and it shouldn't disrupt your daily routine. Try some of these tips and enjoy a healthier, happier day!

### ***Some thoughts.....***

*Man doesn't live by bread alone. He needs buttering up once in a while.*

*Education is reading the fine print. Experience is what you get if you don't.*

*Don't just be good...be good for something.*

*Living on earth is expensive, but it does include a free trip around the sun every year.*

*How long a minute is depends on what side of the bathroom door you are on.*

*And finally...*

*A hug is the perfect gift to give. One size fits all and it's easy to exchange.*

*(Thanks, Joyce Hasko)*

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