



PRESIDENTS LETTER

Linda Kustka

Spring is here! Hooray! Even if it's snowing when you read this, I celebrate this season. Every year, I remind myself that I forget how wonderful it is to experience the greening of our world, emerging and flowering plants, and warmer days without bugs.

The growing numbers of vaccinated friends, family members, and neighbors feels like Spring, too. I hope NARFE members will be fully vaccinated to add to our group's safe feelings when we soon meet in person.

I've been thinking about the positive aspects of our limited lives the past year. We've been forced to try new ways of doing things like communicating more by phone, email, and group social media like Zoom. Zoom has enabled our chapter to stay in touch, continue business, and experience speakers that might not have easily joined us otherwise. In February, we benefited from having a national staff member bring us up to date on NARFE political happenings from her Washington, DC location. Our Chapter board is looking forward to seeing you across the table when we have even better virus news.

With this newsletter, we're starting to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of NARFE with an interview with Jim Honer. We'll be remembering our past throughout the coming year. We'd like to hear *your* NARFE memories.

I've heard a story about the activism of Veterans Hospital staff that resulted in significant action. It would be great to have this story shared now.

Celebrating the past becomes a time of asking ourselves, "What's next?" Your ideas for 2021 and the future of Chapter 120 are most appreciated.

Looking forward to seeing you in healthy times!

"TOP 10" IN CHAPTER 120

1. Rachel R. Caruso.
2. Helen Lenerz
3. Ruth Tormey
4. Francis Esser
5. William Banta
6. Janet Lounsbury
7. Emmett Harp
8. Gene Hiestand
9. Tied: Norman Kuehni and Henry Curran
10. Sidney Follett



What was used for this ranking? Chapter 120 records showing the most years of NARFE membership!

SHARING NARFE CHAPTER HISTORY

Do you have old newsletters or other written records of our chapter history? Memories of past programs or actions? Please share this history with us for the newsletter.



REMEMBERING NARFE HISTORY WITH JIM HONER

Since joining NARFE in 1992, Jim Honer has worn many hats in our chapter and state Federation. He has served Chapter 120 as Service

Officer, Newsletter Editor, Vice President and President. Jim was Vice President and President of the state NARFE Federation. Prior to retirement, Jim worked for the Farmers Home Administration which gave him work opportunities around WI and the US. He and Ginny lived in Gainesville, FL before retiring to the Madison area 30+ years ago.

Those who know Jim recognize his leadership contributions and this zeal for recruiting new members. Jim had a friendly competition with Membership Chairs around the state and kept a spreadsheet comparing who recruited the most new members. In 5 years, Jim recruited 35 new members for Chapter 120. In addition to membership recruitment, Jim has been a long-time proponent of members using the automatic dues withholding system.

Jim and Ginny enjoy meeting people at the local, state, and national NARFE meetings. One of the highlights was hearing Maureen Reagan speak on Alzheimer's. Jim mentions a number of accomplishments advocating for federal employees at the national and state level. He feels that it is an accomplishment that the organization has been able to maintain most of these gains.

Mentors like Leo Lay and Herman Chia were key to Jim's involvement and contributions. Participating in an organization with people working in all aspects of federal government impacted the success and growth of Chapter 120. While Jim appreciates all contributions, he especially noted the skills of Forest Products and Cooperative Extension staff.

Jim feels fortunate to be enjoying life at age 90. Active involvement in his community and NARFE have contributed to his sharp mental abilities.

NARFE STARTS TO ROAR IN THE TWENTIES Editorial reflections

A year after the 1920 Civil Service Retirement Act was passed by Congress, 14 federal retirees met in Washington DC to form the National Association of Retired Civil Employees. This group, which became NARFE as we now know it, formed from concern that the Retirement Act provided a **maximum** retirement annuity of just \$720 per year. With inflation, \$1 in 1921 is worth \$13.43 now. The original **maximum** yearly pension if carried forward would be \$9,669 today. Average income reported to IRS for 1920 in Wisconsin was \$2,900. A 1921 federal retiree in Wisconsin with the top \$720 per year would have 1/4 the average Wisconsin income, but could buy plenty of cabbage at 2 cents a pound, bread at 6 cents a loaf, and perhaps a Victrola for \$25.

MADISON CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP Myrna & Dobbin McNatt

The Madison Chapter Activity Report for 1/20/2021-3/20/2021 lists three new members: **Colette Charbonneau** of Blue River, **Cindy Gehrt** of Madison and **Carol Wettstein** of Middleton. Four members dropped for nonrenewal have been contacted. Five new prospective members have also been contacted. Five member deaths were recorded. The current Madison Chapter membership is 415. There are an additional 171 "National Only" members in our chapter area.

SERVICE OFFICER NOTE Dobbin McNatt

Every NARFE member should read, and save, the "Questions & Answers" entry on Survivor Benefit Processing beginning at the bottom of p. 16 in the March 2021 issue of the NARFE Magazine.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

After the recent passage of the Covid Stimulus bill, the Biden Administration and Congress are ready to move onto other important business. It appears there will be a showdown in the Senate on the reform or elimination of the filibuster. Time will tell how that will turn out and how it will affect legislative activity going forward.

Several bills of interest to NARFE members were recently introduced. The bills getting the most immediate attention relate to the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). H.R. 82 The Social Security Fairness Act introduced by Rep. Rodney Davis (R) of Illinois would repeal GPO and WEP. Another bill waiting original co-sponsorship is being introduced by House Ways and Means Chair Richard Neal, (D) of Massachusetts. This bill would modify the laws and provide a rebate of \$150 per month for those ages 62 and older affected by WEP. Please contact your member of the House and ask them to support these changes.

NARFE also supports another piece of legislation that is currently getting a hearing, DC Statehood. This legislation gets introduced every two years but appears to have more traction this session. H.R. 51/S. 51 would give residents of Washington, D.C. full representation in Congress through an elected Representative and two Senators. Currently, they represented by a non-voting delegate. This would increase the number of Representatives to 436 and Senators to 102. It would not change the number of votes (538) in the electoral college, D.C. is already allotted three electors. As Congress debates this issue, please contact your Representative and Senators with your preferences about this legislation.

Other NARFE legislative priorities under consideration are: cost-of-living-adjustments (COLAs) for federal retirement programs, postal reform, support of pay increases for current

federal workers, maintain affordable health benefits including Medicare, and continuation of the federal long-term care insurance program.

As always, NARFE Headquarters legislative staff are monitoring the introduction of bills and promoting legislation of importance to the federal community. They will continue to keep membership informed and ask us to advocate with Members of Congress. Check out page twelve in the April issue of the NARFE Magazine or go to www.narfe.org and click on the advocacy tab. There you'll find a link to the Legislative Action Center. From there, you can send letters to Members of Congress on issues of concern.

Finally, LEGCon21, NARFE's biennial legislative training conference will be held online June 21-23, 2021. Please consider attending (no travel involved!) this excellent conference to learn more about legislative advocacy. Registration for the event will open in early April. I've attended two in-person trainings and found them to be helpful and inspiring. Chapter 120 has funds set aside to help pay the registration fee. If you have any questions, please contact me by email or phone.

Respectfully submitted,
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NARFE Chapter 120

Virtual Meeting Friday, April 23

Chapter 120 will meet via Zoom on Friday, April 23 with 11:30am check-in/social time and 12 noon meeting start. It is also possible to participate by phone. Bring your favorite beverage and lunch. Bill Bremer, our VP for Programs, is actively working on having a local weather forecaster shower us with knowledge of advances in weather science. As this issue goes to print, it remains too soon to know whether they will be able to join us for the April 23rd meeting or if a “weather delay” requires a later date. We in Wisconsin should know how changeable anything about spring weather can be! If possible, we will let members know via email about any program changes. We look forward to seeing/hearing you as we catch up on NARFE happenings!

Registration is appreciated. Please contact Kathy Losby by Friday, April 16 (email tkmlosby@sbcglobal.net) for your Zoom link and meeting details.



Do you need to change your address, telephone or e-mail listing? There are several ways you can do this. We recommend you do one of these in addition to completing the USPS change of address to save the cost of “Address Service Requested”. Go to www.narfe.org, log in and click on “Update My Record” or Call (toll free) 1-800-456-8410 or E-mail memberrecords@narfe.org