



NARFE (National Active & Retired Federal Employees Association)
Protecting the Future for Retired and Current Federal Employees

Chapter 182 Reporter - Las Cruces, New Mexico
Volume 18, Issue 5 – December 2017

Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/NARFE.LasCrucesChapter.182/>

National Web Site: www.narfe.org

Local Web Site: <http://www.narfe-nm.net/ch0182/ch0182.html>

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR WISHES TO ALL OUR MEMBERS



Chapter President

Sharon Reese

The busy time of the year is well under way. It seems like you never get everything done for family and friends, or the extra little special thank you that is so important. Remember take some “ME” time and do something good for yourself!

It was great to see 66 members and guests at our last membership meeting. Everyone is welcome to attend any of our meetings. Our goal is to provide beneficial information and guest speakers at every meeting.

November is National Scholarship Month and FEEA has released the 2018 Scholarship Application! You can read more about the program, access the instructions, and the online application by visiting: www.feea.org/scholarships. The deadline for applications is March 21, 2018. We have had several members, children, and grandchildren receive scholarships in the past.

The National Office has not released the names of members assigned to the Standing Committees, as of November 20th. The list of committees was in the October issue of our Magazine.



***The New Desert
Harmony Singers***

***will entertain us
on Saturday,
December 9th***

***Please Join Us!
Bring a Friend!***

***General Meeting - Hilton Garden Inn
Sat, Dec 9th, 8:30 a.m. - Esparanza Room
Breakfast Buffet: \$13 cash only
Reservations: NLT Dec 5th
Call Carol Main (382-7686) or Carol Smith (522-3033)***

Franklin McKay, Program Chair

President's Message continued:

Your Board is still waiting for the approved/signed By-laws/Standing Rules that you approved at the October membership meeting. When they are received they will be available to each and every one of you. Our webmaster, Jeffrey Smith, will post the documents on our Chapter website. If you would like a copy mailed to you please let me know and I will be happy to send them to you.

I hope to see you at our December 9th meeting to hear the New Desert Harmony Singers!



Membership Notes

Dan Carroll

Members, be careful when you renew your membership by mail using the form provided by NARFE or via NARFE website (electronically). There are two choices: National and Local (Chapter 182 Las Cruces) or National only. A few members have inadvertently checked National only box and are thus dropped from our local chapter rolls.

The form is confusing so read and fill in carefully. Dues for National and Local are \$50. National only is \$40.

Holidays are coming up and the “New Desert Harmony Singers” will be performing at our December 9th general meeting. Bring a friend or family member.

Be careful when out and about as the thieves are also out. Lock doors to your vehicle when shopping and hide valuables and previously purchased presents. Happy Holidays!



Records Officer

Carol Main

Welcome back to our chapter: **Nadine Boor**
We would like to see you at the December 9 meeting. Come meet your fellow chapter members.

Our chapter membership is **305** members strong!
We had **66** members and guests at our November meeting with **518** volunteer hours reported.

Reminder: Have you changed your home address, telephone number, or email address? If you have dropped your landline and are using your cell phone only, let me know. Please notify me at csmain7@gmail.com or phone (575) 382-7686. We don't want you to miss any copies of the **NARFE** magazine, our chapter newsletter, or any notices we send out.



Sunshine Report

(Marcele Skelton)

The hours of sunshine are decreasing daily, but the Winter Solstice will soon be here. Our days of sunshine will be increasing just before Christmas. A nice present!

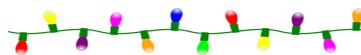
A sympathy card was sent to **Glenda Newcomer**, whose husband, **Norman**, passed away in November. Norman was a long time member who lived in Yuma, Arizona. A get well card was sent to **Tom Banks**, who recently had a heart attack. Tom is a member and former Treasurer of our chapter.

The answer to last month's riddle: **WHAT GROWS UP WHILE GROWING DOWN? (A GOOSE)**

Have some sunshine fun by answering this month's Christmas riddle: **WHAT DO SANTA'S ELVES LEARN IN SCHOOL?**

You can email or phone me with your guess for a surprise. (The answer will be in the next newsletter.)

Please let me know if you hear of a member who is ill, has passed away or could just use a little sunshine in their life. Marcele: 575-521-4954 or marcele@skelton.net.



SAVE YOUR CANS

Thanks to all our members who save their aluminum cans and bring them to our meetings. We also give a big “thank you” to **Bob Main** who collects them and takes them for recycling. The “can money” helps pay for some of the costs of our newsletter.



Service Officer Report (Jim Kielty) - 2017 OPEN SEASON CONTINUES

The 2017 Open Season for the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) and the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) began on November 13 and continues through December 11.

All Open Season changes for federal retirees and survivor annuitants are effective January 1, 2018, and premium changes are reflected in February 1, 2018 annuity payments. Open Season changes for current federal employees are effective at the beginning of the first full pay period on or after January 1, 2018.

FEHBP changes may be made online at <https://retirefehb.opm.gov> by selecting "Open Season Online". FEHBP changes may also be made by calling Open Season Express at 1-800-332-9798. During Open Season, federal retirees and survivor annuitants may also request changes and information by regular mail by writing to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) at FEHB Open Season Processing Center, P.O. Box 500, Lawrence, KS 66046-0500. When using this option, clearly state in writing your Open Season request. If you are making an enrollment change, state the type of coverage (Self Only, Self Plus One, or Self and Family) you desire and the enrollment code. Remember to include your annuity claim number (CSA or CSF number) and your social security number on your request.

With regard to dental or vision insurance under FEDVIP, enrollments, cancellations, or changes may be accomplished by computer at <http://www.benefeds.com/> or by calling 1-877-888-3337.

There are numerous reference sources available to assist you in determining if you should make any changes during the FEHB/FEDVIP Open Season. These include the OPM website at <https://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/healthcare/plan-information/plans>; October, November, and December issues of the *NARFE* magazine; and the 2018 brochure of the plan in which you are currently enrolled, Section 2 of which reflects the plan's changes for 2018. Remember, there is no one health, dental, or vision plan which is best for all. However, by doing your homework, you will find the plan which best meets your needs.

2018 MEDICARE PART B PREMIUMS TO INCREASE FOR MANY RECIPIENTS WHILE REMAINING UNCHANGED FOR MANY FEDERAL RETIREES

On November 20 the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services announced the Medicare Part B premiums for 2018. Most of the approximately seventy percent of Medicare Part B recipients who have their monthly premiums deducted from their Social Security checks and have been paying an artificially low premium of \$109 monthly because they have been protected by a "hold harmless" clause in the Social Security law will see their monthly premiums rise to \$134 monthly in 2018. The remaining thirty percent of Medicare Part B recipients, most of whom are federal retirees not eligible for Social Security and who have their Part B premiums deducted from their federal annuity and were not covered by the "hold harmless" provision, had their monthly premiums increased to \$134 monthly in 2017. These individuals will see no change in their 2018 Medicare Part B premiums, which will remain at \$134 monthly.

The "hold harmless" provision under the Social Security law prevents Medicare Part B recipients who have their monthly premiums deducted from their Social Security checks from seeing their monthly premium rise more than their annual Cost-Of-Living-Allowance (COLA). Since the COLA for both Social Security recipients and federal retirees for 2017 was only 0.3 percent, those covered by the "hold Harmless" provision had their 2017 Medicare Part B premiums capped at \$109 monthly, whereas those having their Medicare Part B premiums deducted from their federal annuity checks saw their premiums rise to \$134 monthly. With a two percent COLA scheduled for 2018 both groups will be paying the same basic premium of \$134 monthly. NARFE has urged Congress to pass legislation which would eliminate the possibility of this unfair premium discrepancy, but no action has yet been taken.





NARFE-PAC
Mary Ellen McKay

The contributions and disbursement figures are out for the period of 1-10-2017 to 9-30-2017 for NARFE-PAC. The main thing I always look at when these figures are published is how is our Chapter doing. In this time frame we had 47 contributors who donated \$1,787.50. That figure is about one-fourth of the amount contributed by all the Chapters in New Mexico. Distributions were made to Congressman Ben Ray Lujan in the amount of \$5,000. Representative Lujan serves on, or chairs, committees that can have a major impact on federal employees and retirees. Senator Martin Heinrich received \$1,500. He has a good record of voting for issues related to the federal community.

At the end of this reporting period the total NARFE-PAC contributions nationally stood at \$818,430.44. That figure gets us on our way to the goal set for this period, but we are not there yet.

A recent message from NARFE headquarters went into detail about how NARFE-PAC operates. I have talked or written many times about the process, but this message is 3 pages long and is very detailed about how things happen. I try to stay informed so I can answer any questions or comments from members. I am going to make several copies of this communication and have it available at the December Chapter meeting.



**Nominating
Committee**
Sharon Willoughby

It's that time of year again when we are looking for NARFE members to step up and run for office. The elected officers are President, 1st Vice President (Legislation Chair), 2nd Vice President (Membership Chair), Secretary, and Treasurer. If any of these positions are of interest to you or if you would like to just serve on the Board of Directors, please let me know. The President elect will have many positions to fill, so let us know if you want to help. The committees you could serve on would be membership, legislation, telephone, sunshine, ways & means, and two members at large, just to name a few. We have a vibrant Chapter and we want to mentor anyone who is interested.

My phone number is 524-9395, and my Email address is swillowbee@comcast.net.

Please give me a call or email if you have any questions or want job descriptions, or maybe just to say yes I want to join in the fun.



Legislation (Judy Rosco)

Our lawmakers are on holiday so things are calm right now. If you have some free time, check out the NARFE Legislative Action Center at www.narfe.org.

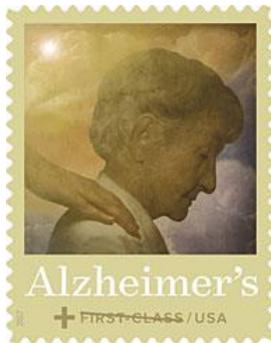
It has many subjects of interest to all of us such as:

--Top Issues

--Weekly Hotline Update

--Legislative Webinars

I'm keeping a close eye on all issues that affect us and I'll do my best to keep all of you informed. I look forward to seeing you at the December general meeting. Happy Holidays!



NEW ALZHEIMER'S STAMP

The U.S. Postal Service released a new stamp on November 30th. Proceeds from the 60-cent stamp will raise funds for the National Institutes of Health, which leads Alzheimer's research. The first-class stamp, which shows someone placing a hand on the shoulder of an elderly woman, hints at the hope and companionship that caregivers and researchers and an aware public can bring.

For the 5 million Americans living with Alzheimer's disease, help can seem far away. Scientists don't fully understand the disease. The progressive dementia it brings can be scary and disorienting. And social isolation and loneliness are often part of the equation, further affecting brain function.

The stamp won't just stick on letters; it will also fuel research as part of the U.S. Postal Service's [semipostal stamp program](#), which permits the sale of first-class stamps above the usual cost. Each 60-cent stamp will raise funds for the National Institutes of Health, which spearheads research into Alzheimer's disease. It will also expand awareness of the disease, which is now the sixth-leading cause of death for American adults.



Alzheimer's (Sarah McAdoo)

We had a great turnout at our November meeting and everyone enthusiastically supported the Alzheimer's raffle. We sent in a total of **\$142**. This included money from the raffle and a donation from Irv and Marcele Skelton.

The New Mexico Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association provides many services to the 38,000 New Mexicans who have Alzheimer's disease and to support their families. I recently talked to a member of our chapter, Mr. Raymond Griego, who is a caregiver to his wife, Martha. Raymond and his son, Dan, took the time to attend one of the Caregiver's classes sponsored by the NM Alzheimer's Assn. Raymond shared with me some of his experiences and highly recommends the Caregiver's class. He and his son learned so many important things that have helped them with properly caring for Martha. He said that he uses the advice and recommendations that he learned in class to help him make a better life for Martha. He learned how to handle situations that could turn bad quickly. He asked me to pass on to other members of the chapter that if you find yourself being a Caregiver that you must take the time immediately to attend one of these classes. For more information please call: Lindsey Bachman, 575-647-3868. Their office is located at 1155 S Telshor, Ste 202, and the email address is lbachman@alz.org.

November 11th, 2017 Meeting – Thanks for Coming!

We had a great meeting in November and were very happy with the large turnout. We thank everyone for attending. We had some new folks show up, some guests, and some long-time members we hadn't seen in a quite a while.

Guests: Ronald and Ruby Aaltonen, April Banks, David and Priscilla Grooms, Dean and Becky Jackson, and John White.

Long-time members: Nadine Boor, Marilyn Koukol, Diana Massengale, Jim and Mary Ann Martin, Tony Nunez, Harry Palmer, and Linda Schultz.



National Active and Retired
Federal Employees Association
Chapter 182
PO Box 16424
Las Cruces, NM 88004-6424

Return Service Requested

**Happy
New Year!**

You Need NARFE – And NARFE Needs You!

Chapter 182 Officers		Members of Congress	
President nmreeses@msn.com	Sharon Reese (575) 532-9422	U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich (D) Loretto Town Center 505 S. Main St., Suite 148, Las Cruces, NM 88001 (575) 523-6561 http://www.heinrich.senate.gov	
1 st Vice Pres. (Legislation) rosco631@gmail.com	Judy Rosco (575) 635-7127	U.S. Senator Tom Udall (D) 201 N Church St Suite 201B Las Cruces, NM 88001 (575) 526-5475 http://tomudall.senate.gov	
2 nd Vice Pres. (Membership) cardan116@comcast.net	Dan Carroll (575) 932-9491	U.S. Representative Steve Pearce (R) (Dist 2) 570 N Telshor Blvd., Las Cruces, NM 88011 (855)473-2723 http://www.pearce.house.gov	
Secretary mayfield195@msn.com	Marlene Mayfield (575) 524-3927		
Treasurer/Ways & Means scsingleton575@gmail.com	Craig Singleton (575) 373-0705		
Alzheimer's/Newsletter Editor mcadoosr@aol.com	Sarah McAdoo (575) 571-6364		
NARFE-PAC: memckay1@comcast.net	Mary Ellen McKay (575) 527-4750	NARFE Monthly Meetings The Las Cruces Chapter of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association holds a breakfast meeting on the 2 nd Saturday of each month except in June, July, & August. The meeting is held at the Hilton Garden Inn, 2550 Don Roser Dr, Las Cruces . Doors open at 8:30am (breakfast at 8:45am), and the cost is \$13. All members, those that might be interested in joining, and guests are most welcome. Membership is open to all federal civilian employees, retirees, their spouses, and surviving spouses. For reservations, contact Carol Main (382-7686) or Carol Smith (522-3033) or email: lascruceschapter182@yahoo.com .	
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Service Officer: jkielty70@yahoo.com	Jim Kielty (575) 523-6044		