

NARFE CHAPTER 1411

NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES
ASSOCIATION

Since February 11, 1975 (30 years) – October 2005



President's Corner

There has been a considerable amount of talk, among active NARFE members, regarding the fact that we have been lobbying congress for a number of years on WEP, GPO, and Premium Conversion with no success of getting any of these issues to the floor of either the House or Senate, let alone getting them passed. This lack of success in getting NARFE issues passed is seen in some circles, as being a negative to our recruiting efforts.

However, success comes in several forms. Although, we have been unsuccessful in getting positive action on the above items, there have been a number of major successes in keeping negative legislation from being passed. There always are, in every congress, efforts to reduce both active employee and retiree benefits. Through the efforts of our National officers and our lobbying staff, a number of attacks have been thwarted. These are successes, just as the passage of positive legislation would be considered successes.

So, if we aren't active, aren't there to challenge the negatives, and don't maintain a constant presence and visibility to our elected representatives, negative legislation can and will happen.

When one of our elected representatives votes against negative legislation, we need to thank them for those votes. Just as we should constantly communicate what we want passed, we need to communicate those things that we do not want passed, and let our representatives know that we appreciate when they support the Federal employee and retiree.

Lee

HEALTH FAIRS COMING UP

NARFE Chapter 80 is sponsoring a Health Fair on Nov 5 at Palo Duro Senior Center. The insurance experts will be setting up at 11:15 am. So, if you want to come early and not sit through Chapter 80's business meeting, be there around 11:15 am. And yes, they will have nibbles as usual, I believe. Yum.

HELP WANTED!!!

Open season for health insurance is from approximately Nov. 8 to Dec. 8. Therefore we participate in going to various local organizations during the time that insurance companies make their presentations. We are very fortunate to be able to converse with potential members at this time. While I will be attending these various fairs with brochures and other advertising, I will need help. As in HELP!

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|--------------------|
| Kirtland AFB, Nov. 7, noon to 3 pm. | Nov. 7 | noon to 3 pm |
| FAA Nov. 8 1:00-4:00 pm | Nov. 8 | 1:00 - 4:00 pm |
| Federal Building, 500 Gold | Nov. 9 | 9:00 am to noon |
| BIA Indian School Road | Nov. 15 | 1:00 pm to 4:00 PM |
| SS District Office | Nov. 22 | 8:00 to 9:00 am |
| Federal Agencies | Nov. 30 | 9 am to 11 am |
| BLM | Nov. 30 | 1:30 pm to 2:30 pm |

Yes we have seven different sites to visit and yes on Nov. 30 we have two different agencies but they are both short times! Look them over and get first pick at the next chapter meeting or give me a call. Betty Annis 299-1682

October 2005
Chapter 1411
NARFE
MEETING!!

JB'S Restaurant

(Behind Owl Café
N. of I-40, E side of
Eubank)

Saturday
October 8, 2005

Lunch starts at 11:00 am;
the meeting begins at
12 noon.

You may order from the
menu or get the buffet.

You may attend the
meeting without the
meal, if you wish.

Please bring a
guest.

Meetings are always
held the 2nd Saturday
of each month. Put a
note on your
calendar right now.

Duke City Chapter 1411
MINUTES OF MEETING
September 2005



The September 10, 2005, meeting was called to order promptly at noon by Lee Tomlin. Lee then led the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. Buzz and Karen Rivard were welcomed as new members of Chapter 1411. There were 19 members and visitors present.

The program was presented by Mary Wilkinson from Congresswoman Heather Wilson's office. She reported that at this time there is no proposed change in Senior Benefits but if there are no changes the Social Security Program will be bankrupt sometime between 2025 and 2052. Congress did not address GPO or WEP during this Session. Mary Wilkinson did suggest that anyone with ideas concerning privatization, payroll tax, SS retirement age, etc., write to Rep. Heather Wilson. She recommended sending correspondence to Heather's Albuquerque office rather than to her office in Washington.

The minutes of the August meeting were corrected as follows. (B) corrected to Records Office instead of Membership - 50/50 drawing was Stan (not Dan) Miller. The minutes were approved as corrected.

Officer's reports were as follows

A - Lee Tomlin gave information concerning the Region VII Conference in Denver, CO, October 5-7, 2005. He also gave information concerning the Federation Executive Board Meeting September 19 in Socorro. There are 4 New Mexico Districts represented at this meeting

B- There was no report from the Membership Committee. Lee encourages members to consider the National Life Membership.

C - It was reported that we gained 1 member bringing our membership to 361 as of 09/01/05.

D - Jerry Lehnus gave a report on action between the National and Local levels. LeeTomlin, Federation Executive, gave a brief report concerning the District, Federation, and Regional levels. Jerry made a motion that Lee Tomlin present the issue of legislative activity at the Chapter, and Federation levels. The motion was seconded and after a brief discussion, passed unanimously.

E - There was no report from the Service Officer.

F - The Sunshine Chair, Edith Davis, reported 4 cards mailed in August.

G - Mercy Lubers reported 514 Volunteer Hours were reported.

H - Joan Houston, Treasurer, reported that from August 1 to August 31, 2005, total receipts were \$220.10, with total disbursements of \$137.56, leaving a balance on hand of \$1396.58.

I - There was no report from the Alzheimer's Chair or from NARFE - PAC.

J - The Program Chair announced that Joyce Pullen from Senator Dominici's office will be the speaker for our October meeting.

There was no reported Unfinished or New Business reported. The 50/50 drawing received \$16.00 - Nellie Burns won \$8.00. The Alzheimer's Collection received \$11.00. Lee Tomlin announced the next meeting will be October 8. He adjourned the meeting at approximately 1 o'clock.

Respectively submitted by Nellie Burns, Secretary

DO YOU HAVE PROGRAM IDEAS?
If so, call Wynona at 891-8830.

**Call your volunteer hours in to
Mercy Lubers at 296-6160.**

**If you know someone who is ill or could use a
card to cheer them up, call
Edith Davis at 293-3919**

AGENCY ON AGING INFORMATION

I recently attended the Agency on Aging Conference at Glorieta. The scenery was gorgeous! I also brought back information of various sorts. I plan on putting the booklets, pamphlets, notebooks, and papers on a table so that people may use them if they need the information. The information varies widely so spend a couple of minutes of time look at the selection.

Betty Annis - 299-1682



A Republican Study Committee issued a report, "Operation Offset," calling for numerous cuts in Government expenditure (<http://johnshadegg.house.gov/rsc/>). Among these are a reduction in the Government's contribution to the Federal Health Care Benefits Plan (FEHBP) for new retirees and reduction in pensions for new retirees. Both changes, we feel, are inherently unfair. Many Federal employees have worked for years with an understanding of their retirement benefits. Changing the rules now, reducing earned benefits, is to renege on a promise. NARFE members are encouraged to contact their Representative and ask that they denounce these proposals. Members wishing sample letters should contact Jerry Lehnus (jlehnus@sandia.net).

Rep. Heather Wilson
20 First Plaza NW,
Suite 603
Albuquerque, NM 87102
Phone: 505-346-6781
Fax: 505-346-6723

Senator Pete Domenici
201 3rd St. NW, Ste 710
Albuquerque, NM 87102
Phone: 505-246-6791
Fax: 505-346-6791

Senator Jeff Bingaman
625 Silver Ave SW,
Suite 130
Albuquerque, NM 87102
Phone: 346-6601
Fax 505-346-6780

Grandkids come out with the craziest things...

I was making lunch and asked my grandson Cameron if he wanted a grilled cheese. He said, "No, I want a boy cheese."

As I sat holding my grandson, his chubby hand touched my face and he said, "Gramma, you'd be pretty if your face wasn't all wadded up."

OBITS for NARFE members (We just got the notices of their passing)

UPSON -- Silas A. Upson, born May 15, 1917, died at home in Albuquerque on February 7, 2005 after a thankfully brief bout with cancer. Si was born in Stafford, KS and grew up in rural upstate New York on a maple syrup farm. He graduated from Purdue University in 1940 with a degree in Physics and immediately joined the U.S. Navy, eventually attaining the rank of Lieutenant. During World War II, he participated in the D-Day invasion, commanded several ships, and was frequently sent in to clear the way for the minesweepers. Years later, as an avid amateur radio operator, he would spend numerous hours during the Vietnam War acting as a radio "patch" between soldiers on active duty and their state-side families. In 1950 he joined the Atomic Energy Commission in Albuquerque where he worked until 1976 as Director of Classification.

PAGE -- Alan Page November 22, 1926 to March 7, 2005
Celebration of life for Alan Page Mass was held at Queen of Heaven Wednesday July 27, 2005, at 10 A.M. Arrangements were made by Riverside Funeral Home of Albuquerque 225 San Mateo NE 505-764-9663.

OCTOBER PROGRAM:

Our next meeting is October 8, 2005. Joyce Pullen, Office Manager from Senator Domenici's office will be speaking with us. She will present hints and clues on how to communicate better with our legislators and answer questions from the floor. Get your questions ready to ask her.



SEPTEMBER PROGRAM NOTES:

Ms. Mary Wilkinson of Congresswoman Heather Wilson's Albuquerque spoke to the September meeting of Chapter 1411, NARFE on Social Security issues. Ms. Wilkinson focuses on Social Security and health care issues, as well as transportation and environmental issues. Ms. Wilkinson noted that while she does know the Congresswoman's position on many issues, she does not know her position on every issue. In general, then, Ms. Wilkinson does not attempt to speak for Congresswoman Wilson.

In general, Ms. Wilkinson said the Congresswoman's current stance on Social Security issues is to keep an open mind and evaluate all proposals in terms of their impact on her constituents. The Congresswoman considers unacceptable any diminution in Social Security benefits for citizens who are retired or are near retirement. Ms. Wilkinson also noted that, because of issues raised by Hurricane Katrina that require immediate attention, legislative action on Social Security is unlikely in this calendar year.

Ms. Wilkinson noted that some change in Social Security will be required. At the present time, monies paid into Social Security by employees and their employers are used to pay those currently receiving Social Security benefits. At the present time, more money is collected than is paid out, and the surplus put into the Social Security trust fund, which is invested in special government securities. However, as Baby Boomers retire, the ratio of retirees to workers will increase, more money will be paid to Social Security beneficiaries than is collected from current workers, and the size of the Social Security trust fund will decrease. In a nutshell, Social

Security will start living off its savings. If the system is not changed, the trust fund will no longer be solvent by the middle of the century.

Clearly, in fairness to our children, something must be done.

Ms. Wilkinson noted that President Bush's proposal to invest part of Social Security income in private accounts does not solve Social Security's solvency problem. With or without private accounts, something has to be changed to keep the Social Security trust fund solvent.

Ms. Wilkinson mentioned H.R. 3304, a bill introduced by Congressman McCrery (R, LA), which would fund private accounts from the current Social Security surplus. She also mentioned other proposals to "fix" social security, including:

- raising the ceiling on taxable income (at the present time, annual income above about \$90,000 is not taxed for Social Security purposes),
- decreasing Social Security benefits for those who are well off,
- raising the retirement age, or
- raising the minimum retirement age.

Ms. Wilkinson invited questions and comments from the assembled NARFE members.

One suggested that Congress needs to do a better job of controlling spending. She suggested that the Social Security trust fund is frequently raided to support current Government spending.

Another member commented that the current cost of living adjustment is inadequate. That is, the cost of living increase

is actually greater than the official estimate. He mentioned the Boskin Commission report [www.ssa.gov/history/reports/boskinrpt.html] and suggested the Congresswoman look into this.

Another member suggested that private Social Security accounts might adversely affect the market. A large flow of Social Security funds into the market, not limited by judgments of the quality of investments, would inflate prices. Later, large withdrawals would deflate prices.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Mr. Nicholas Melancom and

Mr. Serge Rivard

We want welcome you and congratulate you for your good sense to join NARFE Chapter 1411. Please encourage others to come to our meetings. NARFE is the only organization that is working to keep the precious benefits we earned throughout our long careers.

The NARFE magazine, all by itself, is worth the membership money.

Consider lifetime membership and save even more. Ask Lee Tomlin for more information about that.

NARFE, one of America's oldest and largest associations, was founded in 1921 with the mission of protecting the earned rights and benefits of America's active and retired federal workers. The largest federal employee/ retiree organization, NARFE has a membership of nearly 400,000 men and women and represents the interests of nearly 2.3 million federal retirees, spouses, and survivors.

Subject: Republican Study Committee's "Operation Offset"

Check this out!!! This is disturbing news for current federal workers. We must be vigilant regarding any legislation proposed in the coming weeks that may reduce federal employee benefits and write to our representatives opposing such proposals or legislation.

The House Republican Study Committee (RSC) proposes to reduce the retirement annuities of federal workers and require many of them to pay a higher share of their health insurance premiums.

The RSC's "Operation Offset" paper, released Wednesday September 21, suggests that future federal retirees with less than thirty years of service pay a higher percentage share of their Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) premiums than others. In addition, the RSC paper recommends that the federal civilian annuity calculation be based on the highest five years of salary instead of the highest three years. The text of the House Republican Study Committee report appears on their web site at <http://johnshadegg.house.gov/rsc/>

Interestingly, 12 of the 24 members on the House Ways and Means Committee belong to the House Republican Study Committee. As you know, we are waiting for the House Ways and Means Committee to move H.R. 994 on Premium Conversion to the House floor for a vote where we have 251 cosponsors of the 435 voting member House. The Premium Conversion bill was approved by The Government Reform Committee. The House Ways and Means Committee has jurisdiction to get this legislation to the floor for a vote. National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) President Charles L. Fallis has

denounced the House Republican Study Committee's (RSC) proposal to reduce the retirement annuities of federal workers and require many of them to pay a higher share of their health insurance premiums. His message can be found at: www.narfe.org.

NEWS FROM NARFE, September 21, 2005

NARFE DEPLORES PLAN TO OFFSET HURRICANE RELIEF BY CUTTING THE EARNED RETIREMENT AND HEALTH BENEFITS OF FEDERAL WORKERS BY \$11.5 BILLION

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) President Charles L. Fallis today denounced the House Republican Study Committee's (RSC) proposal to reduce the retirement annuities of federal workers and require many of them to pay a higher share of their health insurance premiums.

The RSC's "Operation Offset" paper, released today, suggests that future federal retirees with less than thirty years of service pay a higher percentage share of their Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) premiums than others. The government/employer contribution for FEHBP premiums is 72 percent of a weighted average, and employees and retirees pay the remaining 28 percent. According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimate of this proposal, "the government's share of premium costs would be cut by 2 percentage points for every year of service less than 30. In the case of a retiree with 20 years of service, for example, the government's contribution would decline from 72 percent of the weighted average premium to 52 percent." Such a retiree would pay about \$2,700 more in 2006 than an employee or retiree with 30 or more years of service if they were enrolled in an FEHBP Blue Cross/Blue Shield standard option family plan.

"Not only would these proposals dishonor the government's obligations to its workers, but it also makes public service a much harder sell to talented and skilled persons in today's mobile workforce," Fallis said. "How ironic is it that this committee would offset Katrina relief by cutting the earned economic and health security of the very federal workers that are laboring to get Gulf Coast businesses and residents back on their feet."

"Most of my generation worked for the same employer for our entire careers, but those days are gone," Fallis observed. "This proposal runs counter to every innovation made in employee compensation in the last 20 years aimed at making benefits portable and enabling workers to move to employers where they are needed the most."

In addition, the RSC paper recommends that the federal civilian annuity calculation be based on the highest five years of salary instead of the highest three years. The CBO estimates that this would result in future Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) retirees receiving "\$1,400 less in 2006 and \$7,300 less over five years than under current law."

Fallis concluded, "Federal workers and annuitants have dedicated, and continue to give, so much for our nation and our ideals. NARFE urges the Congress not to use this recent natural disaster as an excuse to sully their service by reducing the retirement and health benefits which are rightfully theirs."

**National Active and Retired Federal
Employees Association**
Duke City Chapter 1411
11913 Golden Gate Ave NE
Albuquerque, NM 87111

Return Service Requested



**NON-PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
ALBUQUERQUE, NM
PERMIT No. 951**

**WE ARE LOOKING FOR A NEW
CHAPLAIN.** Specific religious preference
or denomination is not a requirement.
**CALL LEE TOMLIN at 505-797-9711 IF
YOU ARE INTERESTED**

CHAPTER 1411 Officers and Staff 2005

| | | | |
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