

**Communication ideas suggested during discussion
at the Statewide Gathering in Elephant Butte, September 25-26, 2015
Notes taken by Lorna Howerton and Janice Baker**

Improve Communication between Chapters

Chapters located close to each other (such as the 3 Chapters in the Albuquerque area) hold joint discussions on common issues.

Chapter invites members of at least one other Chapter to attend a regular Chapter meeting.

Chapter having a special program or speaker invites other Chapters to send their members to the special event.

Chapter sends newsletters, postcards (hard copy or email) about special events to other Chapters.

Chapter members bring Nooks, iPads, and similar equipment to show others how to access NARFE information and to use the other features; might appeal to members and potential members who do not have or want computers.

Federation holds a training session led by long-time Service Officers as a Convention session or as a separate meeting/workshop. No human resources experience is needed to become a Service Officer; applicant must learn the resources available and be eager to serve.

David Snell at NARFE Headquarters holds a monthly telephone conference call for Service Officers and interested persons from any Chapter.

Chapters inform each other about particularly successful programs.

Chapters exchange program information at the Federation convention.

Arizona has a Program Chair who collects information on Chapter programs and maintains a database that Chapters may access.

Chapters use the map of Congressional Districts to identify other Chapters that could jointly communicate NARFE concerns to their Representative.

Improve Communication within a Chapter

Chapter newsletter is sent to Chapter members who do not attend meetings; includes local-interest news.

Chapter officers send letters or emails to members who renew; suggest that they provide email addresses and/or go on dues withholding to save money.

Every Chapter member receives a telephone call or email before a Chapter meeting; some members like to be called even though they will not attend the meeting because they enjoy the visit; a call or email makes them feel that they are important to the Chapter.

Non-member spouses are invited to attend Chapter meetings.

Chapters update membership lists by contacting members by emails, letters, or telephone calls; officers and other volunteers divide the membership list; a basic script is provided for the callers.

Chapters place ads in local newspapers and/or submit a public announcement to local radio stations to remind members about Chapter meetings and to invite prospective members.

Chapter officers bring laptops to Chapter meetings to show others how to access the NARFE website and the varied information on it.

Chapters help with transportation of members who do not drive.

Chapter provides interesting programs, such as a Social Security representative to talk about tax issues.

Additional comments by participants

Use of Federation/Chapter funds: Chapter funds that come from member dues must be used for the betterment of NARFE and to meet NARFE goals. Chapter funds cannot be transferred to any other non-profit organization. Chapter by-laws contain guidelines for dispensing of funds. Chapter funds that come from sources other than dues, such as garage sales or hosting a Federation convention, may be used for non-NARFE purposes UNLESS the funds are deposited into the same bank account as member dues and therefore cannot be distinguished from dues. Non-dues funds may be kept in a separate bank account, or the Chapter Treasurer may deposit into and disburse the funds from separate account categories within one bank account.

A garage sale is a good way to obtain additional funds. Don't forget the coffee with Irish cream....warms up the function.

Matching funds from Headquarters: Matching funds are available from Headquarters for recruiting activities, such as placing ads in newspapers. The process is simple; the form is available online. The request for funds asks for details about the proposed activity. Headquarters requires a post-activity report.

Headquarters is holding a special recruitment drive between now and the end of the year. Recruiters will receive \$10 for each new member recruited.

Federations and Chapters may add their own incentives. Submit applications to Headquarters when collected; don't wait until the end of year because of holiday closures. Keep copies of applications to insure that \$10 is received.

Headquarters reports that it receives an average of 25 death notices per day. Because not all deaths are reported, the actual number may be as high as 50 per day.

Final count of attendance at the Statewide Gathering is 49. Attendance at the 2014 Federation Convention, at which substantial NARFE business was conducted, was approximately 80.

Janice's comments after reading the evaluation forms

Participants' comments on the Statewide Gathering were overwhelmingly positive. We now have an excellent opportunity to practice improved communication within and between Chapters.

Let your fellow Chapter members know what you learned at the Gathering, especially the draft recommendations of the Strategic Planning Committee. Tell them that they will have a chance to discuss these topics and more at our Federation Convention in April 2016 and to vote on any resolutions at the National Convention in August 2016. Urge them to plan now to attend both conventions. Ask your Chapter officers to consider a proposal to offer financial assistance to Chapter members who want to attend the conventions---an excellent use of dues money.

Nine Chapters did not have a representative at the Statewide Gathering: Taos, Las Vegas, Espanola Valley, Farmington, Gallup, Socorro, Tucumcari, Pecos River, and Alamogordo. Contact the President of one or more of the Chapters and offer to attend their meeting to talk about the topics covered at the Statewide Gathering, especially the draft recommendations of the Strategic Planning Committee. Remind them of the dates of the Federation and National conventions in 2016 and urge them to attend.