



NARFE
National Active & Retired
Federal Employees Association

Protecting the Future for Retired and Current Federal Employees

New Mexico Federation

Voices

Summer 2008



News
Actions
Reports
Facts
Efforts



Issue 2008-2

National Web Site: www.narfe.org

Federation: <http://www.narfe-nm.net>

President's Message
Mary Ellen McKay

It doesn't seem possible that 6 weeks have passed since the end of the New Mexico Federation Convention in Alamogordo. We have certainly gone through the spring season in those 6 weeks. It is in the triple digits today, and some of our attendees drove in snow to get to the Convention. That is typical New Mexico! In the 6 weeks since the Convention, the Federation Board has met and is working hard on plans for the coming two years of our terms. One of the changes is evident to those of you who have received "Voices" before. We have a new heading and other template changes. Under the capable direction of Executive VP, Sharon Willoughby, you will receive updates on changes to contact information as they occur. We also hope to make "Voices" relevant and as timely as possible. We welcome items from Chapters that are of statewide interest, particularly in the area of membership. We also have a new editor, Ruth French of Chapter 182. We are so grateful to Anthony Kujawa for being the editor for several years and to Chapter 80 for mailing assistance. Anthony deserves a big THANK YOU!!

I want to thank the Alamogordo Chapter for an outstanding Convention. In fact, they deserve a standing ovation! Everything went very smoothly. There was time to socialize and exchange ideas, and thanks to President Hal Waters, the business meeting was very effective and efficient.

The message from Jill Crissman, who is on the NARFE Headquarters Legislative staff, was very informative and well received. She emphasized the importance of what NARFE has done in the past to protect our retirement benefits and how important it is for everyone to be involved to protect those benefits in the future. There is nothing guaranteed in our contract with the Federal Government. We must elect good people and help them to make good decisions on our behalf. *(cont. on page 5)*

Executive Vice President
Sharon Willoughby

NARFE is not a social organization. We were organized to protect ourselves and our families. We fought for and gained retirement benefits and we have been trying to protect them ever since. Congress is always looking for money to spend on their pet projects. That's how we got the Windfall Elimination Provision law. Am I preaching to the choir? Yes I am.

RECRUTING: When recruiting, tell potential members about the numerous and important NARFE services. You can accomplish this by giving them "What has NARFE done for you lately?," and then emphasize the high points. Let them also know the individual services such as our Service Officer who can help them with OPM, Social Security and what to do in case of the death of a retiree. We actively participate in volunteer work in the community. Alzheimer's is one of our major projects and so on.

Promote *Dues Withholding* and *Life Membership*, emphasize membership and its vital connection to NARFE's legislative efforts. We have more power if we have impressive numbers. Prospects should immediately realize that through membership, they actively influence NARFE's goals and, more importantly, their own retirement security. They must understand that NARFE members are an integral part of our legislative agenda. Mention NARFE's Honorary Members, who have been with the Association for twenty years or more. This lends credibility to our long-standing commitment to preserving federal retirement benefits. And remember, recruit a friend.

We are not a social organization, but we should promote informative and entertaining programs and a friendly atmosphere at all of our meetings. Go out and have fun!!!

Secretary's Report *Gloria Delgado*

The first meeting of the New Mexico NARFE Federation convened on April 19, 2008, after a successful 2008 State Convention at the Willie Estrada Convention Center in Alamogordo, New Mexico. The newly elected Federation Officers for 2008-2009 are: President, **Mary Ellen McKay**; Executive Vice President (Membership), **Sharon Willoughby**; Vice President (Legislation), **Bill Gomez**; Treasurer, **Rick DeMello**; and Secretary, **Gloria Delgado**. The newly elected District Vice Presidents are: **Madeline Jennings** (NW District); **Jim Bjurman** (NE District); **Tom Anderson** (SE District); and **Roy Willoughby** (SW District).

President McKay informed members that the Board meets five times a year (three regular meetings and a pre- and post-convention meeting). Good communication is expected among all officers. The best method recommended was via e-mail. The Mileage Reimbursement Policy for travel is \$0.32 cents per mile. The Treasurer requested Board Members submit their annual budgets to include mileage, hotels, supplies, postage, etc.

A "Courtesy Resolution" approved at the State Convention was mailed to Senator Pete Domenici in honor of his outstanding tenure as New Mexico's U.S. Senator and a good supporter of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees. The resolution extended a sincere "Thank You" and best wishes for a happy and healthy retirement on behalf of the New Mexico Federation of NARFE, its Executive Board, the 22 local Chapters, and the 3400 New Mexico members.

The second meeting was convened on May 19. Proxies and number of delegates to the upcoming NARFE National Convention in September were discussed. Identity theft problems and NARFE privacy issues were also discussed. All information regarding members / membership will be carefully guarded and kept private. The District workshop schedules are: NW (October), SW (October), SE (November), and NE not yet set.

President McKay talked about a new program in the state called "Engage New Mexico." The program will help those with needs for life. A motion was approved for the Federation to support his program. Tom Anderson expressed his appreciation for the information packet provided to District VPs by Maxine Simmons. A motion was approved that, due to Maxine's broad experience and knowledge of NARFE, she be appointed "consultant emeritus" to the Federation.

Did you know that the New Mexico state flower is the yucca, the state grass is blue gramma, the state tree is the pinon, the state vegetables are both chile and pinto beans, the state insect is the tarantula hawk wasp, and the state bird is the roadrunner?

NEW MEXICO CONFERENCE ON AGING *Nadine Boor, Federation Chair on Aging*

This year, the 30th annual New Mexico Conference on Aging will be in Albuquerque at the Sandia Resort and Casino Conference Center, August 26 - 29. This Conference provides a great opportunity to reunite with old friends and learn about new programs and approaches to aging. With its workshops and booths, the conference provides seniors and professionals a chance to exchange ideas and work together to increase senior independence and dignity.

The NARFE NM Federation of Chapters partners with the NM Aging and Long Term Services Department. With the help of matching funds from national headquarters, a 1/2-page NARFE ad was placed in this year's conference program book.

So, mark those four days on your calendar now! After three and one half days of fun, workshops, a sports and fitness fair, a health fair and numerous round table sessions, the Conference will be augmented by **Engage New Mexico! Fiesta**, a job and volunteer fair which is scheduled for Friday afternoon. For more information about the fiesta and registration forms, see the information below or web surf to www.nmaging.state.nm.us.

COME TO THE CONFERENCE ON AGING'S JOB AND VOLUNTEER FAIRS!

So, you've finally retired! You've tried fishing, golf, art, bingo, and baby-sitting the grandchildren. You're wondering, "Is this all there is?"

Let's talk. Is something meaningful missing from your life? Are you worried about the downturn in the economy? Maybe you need extra income.

Did you know that federal and some state laws and policies are changing to benefit the older worker? Companies are looking at flextime, job sharing, and part-time work options for retirees. And, if you'd like to give back to your community, organizations are clamoring for mature, experienced volunteers.

If you want to learn more about volunteering, work, or continuing education in New Mexico, join us at the Conference on Aging's Engage New Mexico! Fiesta. The Fiesta is scheduled on Friday, August 29th at the Sandia Resort and Casino in Albuquerque. Everyone is welcome to attend **at no cost to you**. There will be booths for employers recruiting older workers, as well as for agencies recruiting volunteers.

Begin your day at 8:30 a.m. with a nationally recognized keynote speaker on civic engagement, then stay for the Fiesta from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Between 10:00 and 11:30 a.m., we will hold workshops on work and volunteering. For more information, contact the NM Aging and Long-Term Services Department at 505-222-4500.

Region VII Message

Russ Boor, Region Vice President

A Perfect Storm Brewing for Next Year?

- § Credit crisis and housing foreclosures continue
- § Recession looming
- § Inflation on the rise
- § Energy crisis increasing
- § General decrease in retirement and health benefits for workers
- § Tidal wave of baby boomers - 77 million by 2017
- § People are living longer - 1 in 5 will be age 65 or older by 2010
- § Medicare projected to be insolvent by 2019
- § First year of a first term for a new President - the "honeymoon" period
- § Large turnover in Members of Congress
- § President and Members of Congress like to take unpopular steps during the first year of first term.
- § Entitlements probably will be the key to reform - Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Civil Service Retirement and Disability Program, Federal Employees Health Benefit Program and Veterans health care
- § Health care issues and reform are popular with the people

Recent Government Actions:

- § OPM's 2009 Call Letter to FEHBP insurers asks for creation of a pilot separate health plan for Medicare-eligible federal annuitants
- § Same letter also asks for expansion of Health Savings Accounts and High Deductible Health Plans
- § OPM continues to not seek subsidy for providing drug coverage to Medicare eligible annuitants
- § Supreme Court allows employers to reduce retiree health benefits based on age

Presidential Candidates Stand on Health Care:

- § Clinton - establish a parallel FEHBP-like plan for the general population with a separate risk pool
- § Obama - use FEHBP as a model for all
- § McCain - make complete health care premiums, including employers portion, taxable to employee and annuitant. To offset this increase in taxable income, give a tax credit to cover the cost. Increase in tax credit will be tied to general inflation, not to health care inflation which has been running around twice the rate of the general inflation. After a few years this tax credit would be almost worthless.

Upon reviewing all the above factors, one might conclude there is a "Perfect Storm" approaching and we need to keep a close watch on what legislation, directives and regulations the President, Congress and OPM might propose for this coming year. ***We must organize now and be ready to quickly act to protect our earned annuities, benefits and health care.***

The Northwest District, *Madeline Jennings*

The month of May marks the beginning for some new members of the NM Federation Executive Board (NM FEB). It also marks the retirement of Executive Vice President Maxine Simmons from our group as well as Russ Boor's impending retirement from Region VII activities after the national convention in the fall.

Speaking for the NW District Chapters (Albuquerque, Belen, McKinley County (Gallup), and San Juan Valley (Farmington): we are looking forward to new approaches in the upcoming year. The NWD will hold its district meeting in Belen at the Vista Del Rio Mobile Home Park. Community Room on **Oct. 14, 2008**. We are still formulating the agenda and activities surrounding the meeting. More information about this event will be available as the summer progresses.

Two of the four NW District chapters are on holiday or "dark" until September. This means that we must stay in touch with the members during the summer months. Membership continues to be an important issue that we need to track and manage for our chapters' health. We always want to add new members and must work on plans for successful recruitment of new members.

From the NWD, we wish to thank everyone in Alamogordo for a great annual convention. A good time was had by all, and it was great seeing all of our friends from other chapters.

Southwest District, *Roy Willoughby*

All of the Southwest District chapters have been contacted. We have talked about having chapter visits in the early fall. I emphasized that I wanted to have open discussions so we could address potential problems and explore some new concepts and ideas. Chapter 1402 in Socorro and Chapter 1341 in Truth or Consequences now have new presidents. Otherwise, there are no changes in leadership in the other three chapters. So far, we do not have a host chapter identified for our fall workshop, but Las Cruces could host the workshop in October. I have also asked all of the chapters if anyone will be going to the National Convention. Most said that they didn't think anyone was going this year in which case we will arrange to carry their proxies.

I am looking forward to an exciting and productive two years as your Southwest District VP.

Did you know? New Mexico's distinctive insignia is the Zia Sun, which originated with the Indians of the Zia Pueblo in ancient times. Its design reflects their tribal philosophy, with its wealth of pantheistic spiritualism teaching the basic harmony of all things in the universe.



Northeast District, *Jim Bjurman*

Here is the report on activities in the Northeast District by the newly elected Vice-President of said district. I hasten to add that, since I was the only candidate, I did not have to resort to attack ads and the use of outside political consultants to secure this position. It would be nice to say the same for our local, state, and national elections but then I am a dreamer. I also serve as the Chapter President of Rio Rancho 1381. While this is added work, there is the advantage that I have one of my chapter visits already completed.

I would like to put forth my view on what I hope to accomplish in my position and then give a highlight of chapter activities. I see my role as being a conduit between the chapters and the Executive Board. I do not claim to have all the answers, or even any answers, but I am here to listen, suggest, and work with the chapters so that we all achieve the goals of NARFE. I see several areas that I think we can improve upon, and those are communications, public relations, and marketing. Further, I believe that efforts should not be limited to inside chapters, but also between chapters both inside and outside the District. During my chapter visits, I will be interested in seeing how a chapter communicates with its members, what is working and what is not. I will like to see what forms of public relations a chapter employs, and from there, how these efforts can be used to market the NARFE brand. I hope that chapters will actively share their ideas, successes and, yes, failures in these areas with other chapters.

OK, enough about what I think, have I done anything since becoming Mr. VP? I have attended one FEB meeting in mid-May that provided me with the opportunity to meet and work with my fellow District VP's and the rest of the Executive Board. At the beginning of May, I traveled to Taos Chapter 1401 and installed the newly elected officers. The chapter also is in the planning stages of the 2010 state convention.

I would like to share with you part of a note that ties in with my ideas on public relations and marketing that I received from Kathleen Keer, President of Santa Fe Chapter 186... "We participated in the Santa Fe Community Day on the Plaza on May 17th. Several of our members manned a booth to let people know about NARFE and to pass out literature. We had a good response from the locals and a great many of the tourists who were on vacation who also just happened to be federal employees or retirees from other parts of the country. Some were from Front Royal, VA, Falls Church, VA, Washington, DC, San Diego, CA, Amarillo, TX, and San Antonio, TX. All asked questions and were given information. Most surprising of all that those from the Washington, DC, area said that they had never heard of NARFE. We felt like we had a good day and should certainly consider doing this again." ➤

Southeast District, *Thomas J. Anderson*

Another great Federation Convention is history. And, we have a new (nearly all) group of leaders that I am sure everyone is happy with. First, a big "Thank You" goes to past President Hal Waters, and his wife Margaret. They certainly spent a lot of time on the road for us. It is that kind of dedication that makes us appreciate NARFE. Good luck to both of them.

Some Chapters are dark during summer months and may not know who our Federation officers are. So I'll tell you. Mary Ellen McKay, previously Vice President for Legislation, is now President. Sharon Willoughby, Vice President, Gloria Delgado, Secretary, Rick DeMello, Treasurer, and Voices Editor Ruth French. You will all learn more about these fine folks as the next two years progress. Yes, They have two-year terms.

One thing about writing for a newsletters is that you can go on and on without interruption or contradiction. I hope that, what I have to say, is worth reading. But, that is up to the reader.

One thing for sure, most readers are members of the one organization that is the most effective and influential of any federal employee or retiree member group when it comes to watching what happens in Congress and working to keep what we earned. Our people in National Headquarters are the watchdogs, but it takes members to provide the bite.

Our membership is important, even critical, to the effectiveness of NARFE. I was startled to learn that only 17 cents of every dollar we receive in annuity is our original retirement allotment if we retired only 20 years ago. The balance is from COLA's. If you read the NARFE Magazine article on the membership survey, you know that our average length of membership is 14 years, and that about 24% have more than 20 years of membership. I was also surprised to see that New Mexico has 26,604 annuitants with a monthly annuity of \$52,052,000. And did you see that total. No wonder we need to watch our wallets so closely. It's too bad that just over 10% of us have to carry the load for everyone. If you didn't read the article, you really should dig out that June issue and do it!

Northeast District Vice President (continued)

Kudos to Kathleen and the rest of the Santa Fe Chapter for a job well done.

George Thomas of Duke City 1411 has proposed a multi-chapter election forum early this fall. He is going to work on this, and it is his and my hope that by combining chapter efforts that we may be more likely to get Congressional and Senate candidates to come visit with us to discuss NARFE's legislative priorities.

I close now, and look forward to meeting with the other chapters this fall. Take care and enjoy the summer.

President's Message (continued from page 1)

I do appreciate the support of the members who have volunteered to be on committees for the coming term. Several people came up to me at the convention and volunteered. I am always so gratified by everyone who is willing to go the extra mile.

I will be contacting your chapter in the next couple of months to set up a time when I can visit. I want to get to know as many members personally as I can. The only way I can do that is by meeting and visiting with you face-to-face. We don't have to do anything very formal or fancy, just a time to share and build relationships in the NARFE family. I want chapter visits to be an opportunity for you to tell the Federation how it can help chapters. I do have a couple of ideas that I can share (if you want me to) that might make your meetings more fun and more productive. If you have someone who would like to do "home hospitality" I am amenable to that.

It is not too soon to be thinking about NARFE Legislative Day in Santa Fe. The date is yet to be determined. The 2009 Federation Convention is in Albuquerque on April 16, 17 and 18, 2009. I think someone said something about "Loose Slots, Good Roads, and Cheap Gas". Or was that the title of a country western song?

May I remind everyone that 2008 may be the most important election year in New Mexico that we have had for decades – and maybe ever. We want to be heard.

Legislative News, *Mary Ellen McKay*

NARFE members need to be aware of a source of some very interesting articles that are of interest to both retirees and current employees. The articles are in the "Washington Post" under the heading "Federal Diary", and the articles are by Stephen Barr. You can access the web site at www.washingtonpost.com. In a recent article, he wrote about the Office of Personnel Management sending a "stop work" letter to the contractor developing a software system to calculate retirement benefits for federal employees. This action was taken because of the flaws and defects uncovered by the OPM during tests of the benefits calculator. Only 5 of 61 functions worked as intended. This has slowed the anticipated automation of the benefits calculations. Current employees anticipating retirement would be ↗

**National Convention Resolutions & Bylaws/
Standing Rules Amendments**

are posted on the NARFE the website. While visiting the site, click on the National Convention box. Bylaws & Resolutions will be posted upon receipt. www.narfe.org



Treasurer's Report

Rick DeMello

Beginning Balance		\$14,336.98
Income		\$13,659.64
Interest	\$14.23	
10% Monies	\$7,798.66	
Per Capita Assessments	\$5,470.50	
Matching Funds		
Conference On Aging	\$200.00	
NM Federation Banner	\$97.50	
Reimbursemet for Shipping	\$78.75	
Expenses		\$16,415.56
Officer Vouchers	\$14,977.43	
District VP Awards	\$300.00	
Liability Insurance	\$75.00	
Newsletter	\$385.30	
Region 7 Conference	\$45.00	
Conv Reg for Nat'l Rep	\$55.00	
Conference on Aging	\$382.83	
NM Federation Banner	\$195.00	
Balance		\$11,581.06

Legislative News (continued)

smart to realize that it may not be as fast as OPM was expecting.

Other websites you can access for information of interest to retirees, active employees, and spouses, include the NARFE website, as well as the NM Federation and Chapter 182 sites respectively:

www.narfe.org, www.narfe-nm.net, and www.narfe-nm.net/ch0182/ch0182.html. You can find a wealth of information on these sites, including about how NARFE has testified in support of legislation to change rules for re-hiring federal annuitants. Other things of interest are the Service Officers of the Year that were recently recognized by NARFE, facts about the NARFE-Alzheimer's program and information about federal employees' and retirees' benefits by the Retirement Benefits Service Department.

It is understood that every member and spouse should be reading the monthly NARFE Magazine. Keep yourself informed to get the most out of your retirement.

NARFE

New Mexico Federation of Chapters

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

Voices

Published Quarterly (March, June, September, & December)

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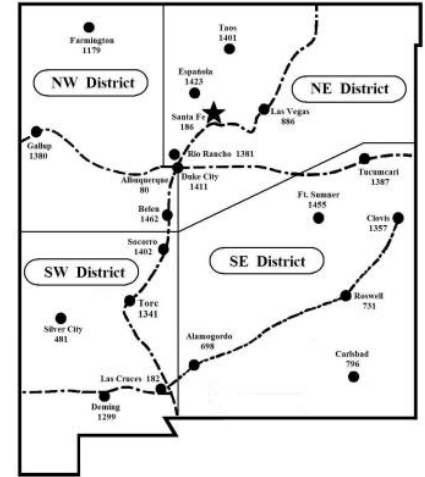
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US Postage Paid
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48th Annual Convention
April 16 – 18, 2009
Albuquerque, New Mexico

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