



NARFE

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

New Mexico Federation



Voices



December 2016 Issue



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Lorna Howerton

Since our last issue the 34th Biennial NARFE National Convention was held in Reno, NV (August 28-September 1). As you've most likely heard two historic resolutions were adopted – one member/one vote and optional chapter membership. These will make an important impact to NARFE's governance & structure. Other resolutions adopted updated NARFE's mission statement, supported the establishment of Congressional District Leaders (CDL) and Senatorial Leaders (SL) in all states and expanded access to NARFE's membership database for advocacy purposes. The convention Delegates adopted NARFE's Legislative Program for the 115th Congress. The full 115th Congress Legislative Program will be published in the January 2017 issues of NARFE magazine. Besides the re-election of National President Dick Thissen and National Secretary/Treasurer Jon Dowie to second terms, I am pleased to say that Rodney Adelman was re-elected as the Region VII Vice President.



With the 2016 elections over, how will NARFE members fare under the new administration and Congress? Based on recent articles and reports, the Federal community benefits may be at risk. It is important to share concerns of protecting your earned employment & retirement benefits with the returning members of Congress. Based on information from Region VII VP, Rodney Adelman, NARFE will be making changes to our grassroots advocacy program. The 'Protect America's Heartbeat' campaign will be merged into the NARFE Legislative Department's website. And the monthly legislative webinars, available to all NARFE members, will be refocused on current policy issues. I urge you join in on the webinars!

Rodney also shared the following information about Membership: “While our membership decline has slowed from the rate of prior years, we are still on the decline. Optional Chapter Membership is one way that NARFE proposes to attract Baby Boomers, who are less inclined to be “joiners”. NARFE's continued success depends upon membership growth and a new generation of leaders.

NARFE's fall membership recruitment incentive continues to be successful, with over 500 new members recruited to-date. Another successful initiative has been the Federal Benefits Institute webinars, with an average of 1,000 participants each, bringing in an average of 141 new members and 25 reinstatements each time. The webinars will be expanded from 10 in 2016 to 15 in 2017, with an broadening of topics to be covered. Finally, the new NARFE Membership Application should appear in your January NARFE magazine. New NARFE members will be given the opportunity to join a local Chapter when submitting the Membership Application and at renewal."

Hopefully, the employees/retirees several members talked with during the Health Fairs throughout the State will add to our roles, for the sake of our budget and the Legislative agenda.

At the National Executive Board (NEB) meeting held in November, several topics were discussed.

Following are highlights:

- 2017 NARFE Budget was approved at roughly \$10.3 million, including funds to hire an Executive Director. The search process continues with a projected hire date of May 2017.
- One member – one vote policies were adopted. ALL NARFE members (Chapter & National residing in each state) must be represented and services provided as part of our "fiduciary responsibility" for received 10% funds. More information and/or changes may be coming to ensure Federations are "inclusive" of both Chapter & non-Chapter members. New Mexico Federation has identified a committee to review our by-laws as soon as more information is received from Headquarters.
- A new Strategic Planning committee is being formed. The short list of topics to be addressed include: Dues setting and adjustment by the NEB (the previous resolution failed at the last convention by just 49 votes), evolving towards a state advocacy structure (per the resolution passed at the last national convention) and support of Federations, procedures for merging or closing inactive Federations, marketing enhancements, payment procedures, and training and qualifications for National positions.

NARFE is evolving to meet the need of current and future members. Through the growing pains, I want to thank you for your continued support and dedication to NARFE.



Hope Everyone Had A Happy Turkey Day!

The above picture shows (L to R) Chapter VP Wayne Clark, Chapter Secretary Grace Phillips, NM Federation President Lorna Howerton, Chapter President Tom Anderson, SEDVP Dennis Clark.

State NARFE President Lorna Howerton and SEDVP Dennis Clark Clark attended the meeting of Tucumcari Chapter 1387 on October 10. They brought the Chapter members up to date on the recent National convention proceedings, concerns of the Federation, plans for state workshops, and announced that Tucumcari has been chosen to host the 2018 state convention. This news was greatly appreciated, as was their attendance. May the future of NARFE be good.

Submitted: Tom Anderson, President Tucumcari Chapter 1387

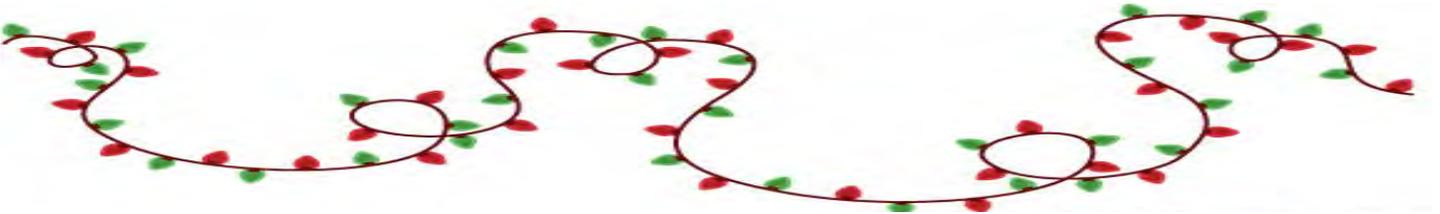
Introducing the New Mexico Federation Service Officer

Jim Kielty, member of Las Cruces Chapter 182, has volunteered to assist NARFE members (Chapter and National residing in New Mexico) who contact him by e-mail or by telephone with questions on such topics as, but not limited to, retirement, federal health insurance, Medicare, federal long term care insurance, or the steps to be followed in the event of the death of a federal annuitant, survivor annuitant, or their spouse. His e-mail address is jkielty70@yahoo.com and phone number is 575-523-6044. If you need to exchange correspondence, his mailing address is 235 West Madrid Avenue - Apartment 8, Las Cruces, New Mexico, 88005.

Jim's background/bio:

"I have been a member of NARFE for many years, but became actively involved in the organization upon my retirement in 2007 from my position as a civilian employee of the Department of Army. I have been the Service Officer for NARFE Chapter 182 in Las Cruces since 2009. I also serve on the Chapter 182 executive committee and write a monthly column for our chapter newsletter.

I grew up in Winston-Salem, North Carolina and after earning a bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill I began a 37-year career with the Department of Army. I worked in the Civilian Personnel (Human Resources) career field and spent the majority of my career as a Labor-Management and Employee Relations Specialist. I worked at three separate army installations in Corpus Christi, TX; Dover, NJ; and White Sands Missile Range, NM. I have lived in Las Cruces for 42 years. My hobbies include reading and watching a variety of sporting events."



Nancy Brunson,
Exec VP Membership

As I write this column, we are in the midst of staffing the Open Season Health Fairs. This year we have a total of 80 Health Fairs in New Mexico. This is a challenge for some of the smaller chapters and I thank every one of our Volunteers for their participation. We will provide some feedback in the next 'Voices' publication. We anticipate gaining many more members for NARFE with the activation of the new eNARFE Chapter – the online chapter-at-large.

At many Health Fairs I staffed, Federal employees mentioned they had heard about NARFE before and have just failed to sign up – or they were waiting until they actually retired. I am confident these conversations will someday result in a new member – it has been noted that many folks hear about NARFE three (3) times before they actually join. If you have had a similar experience, please note your work was not in vain. These employees have seen our publications and you have made an accomplishment by planting a seed. Thank you!

One other method for recruiting is to stay in touch with the Human Resources offices for the agencies you visited. You can send e-mails throughout the year to the H.R. representatives to advise them of future Webinars that might have a topic of their interest. At that time, you can offer to deliver new NARFE publications to their offices.

We need to focus also on member retention. Please make any new members feel welcomed and offer to keep them active and a working part of your chapter. Each member is a valuable resource. I look forward to seeing you at our Southern Workshop or at our Northern Workshop to be held in the Spring, 2017!

Nancy Brunson, Exec VP Membership





Dennis Clark, SE area VP NARFE Federation Board

Southeast New Mexico District Report for October 31, 2016, Voices
Alamogordo Chapter 0698

Alzheimer's Disease has been a top project for not only Alamogordo Chapter 0698 but other chapters in our district. As of 10/2/83 to 1/31/16 Alamogordo had donated \$46,235 .07. Our latest drive through the Summer brought in another \$1,085. And through our monthly raffles of 50/50 for 2016 of \$223 our grand total is now \$47,543.07 donated to this cause.

Roswell Chapter 731

Roswell Chapter has donated a total of \$32,100.00 from 1983 until 2016. So far in this year Roswell has donated \$ 3,000.00 at the 2016 New Mexico Convention in April.

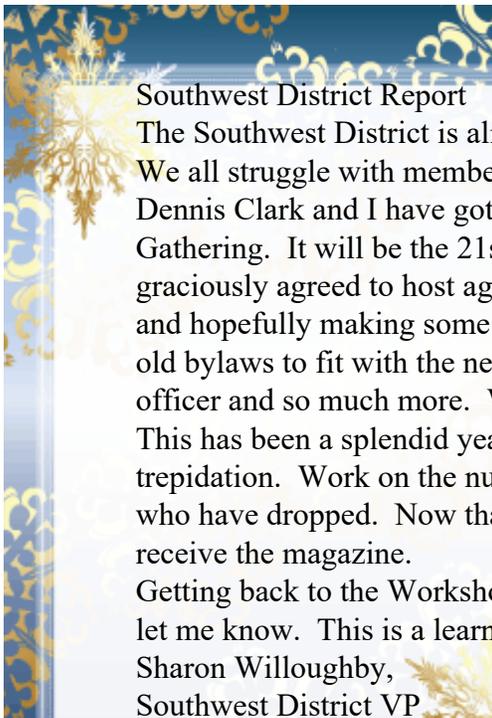
Tucumcari Chapter 1387

Tucumcari Chapter 1387 has donated From April 1997 through September 2016 a total of \$5911.00. For the current year of 2016 they have donated a total of \$262 through September.

Pecos Chapter 1455

Pecos Chapter in Santa Rosa has donated small amounts over the years since they do not meet often. This year no donations have been made.

This makes a grand total of the four chapters through 2016 of \$88,816.07. This is a remarkable total from four small chapters of Southeast New Mexico and I am very proud to announce this to the rest of the state.



Southwest District Report

The Southwest District is alive and well. All of the Chapters are moving right along and doing well. We all struggle with membership and attendance and it is nothing new.

Dennis Clark and I have gotten our dates and the location for the Southern Chapters Workshop Gathering. It will be the 21st and 22nd of April 2017. We are pleased to say the T or C Chapter has graciously agreed to host again this year. I hope all of you are looking forward to seeing old friends and hopefully making some new ones. We will touch on a verity of subjects this year: reworking your old bylaws to fit with the new Federation and National bylaws; Membership; Legislation; Service officer and so much more. We will be getting more information out as soon as we have the agenda set. This has been a splendid year so far. I know a lot of you are looking at the new Congress with trepidation. Work on the numbers of membership in your chapter; keep talking to friends and those who have dropped. Now that belonging to a chapter is optional, they might consider rejoining to receive the magazine.

Getting back to the Workshop Gathering, if you have a subject you would like us to talk about, please let me know. This is a learning experience as well as a fun time for all who attend.

Sharon Willoughby,
Southwest District VP

Now that the elections are over please do not let your guard down. The lame-duck session may see some activity that will affect federal employees and retirees. I encourage everyone with an email to go online to NARFE, under Legislation Department, and sign up for all legislative alerts. These alerts will keep you informed as to what is going on in Congress. I would like to know if there is anyone in Congressional District 2, US Representative Steve Pearce, that would like to volunteer to be his CDL? For further information please contact me at 575-649-6035 or residence 575-532-9422, or email nmreeses@msn.com.

I would also like to know if there are any SLs or CDLs that plan to attend the Legislative Conference in March. It's not too early to plan for this conference. If you plan to attend I will make all appointments with the Senators and Representatives. I think this conference will be very important since the new President will only be in office about 60 days but look for there to be many changes in the near future!

Items to stay on top of include:

CRA: President Barack Obama signed the continuing resolution to fund the government on Sept. 29, but that expires on Dec. 9. Congress must pass legislation that will keep the government open throughout FY17, which will provide federal agencies and businesses the long-term certainty to create jobs and grow our economy,"

Passing the Defense spending bill (NDAA): The two chambers of Congress have yet to hash out their differences on a defense spending bill. The House and the Senate have passed different versions of the National Defense Authorization Act, which is currently in conference to resolve the differences.

Obama has threatened to veto the House version of the bill over certain maneuvers intended to increase the budget beyond what he requested. The House Armed Services Committee plans to take \$18 billion from Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) and move it into the base budget. That \$18 billion would be used to fund an increased military pay raise and to bolster troop levels by 27,000.

What would be left in OCO is \$41 billion, instead of the original \$59 billion requested by the President. That's enough to cover the wars until April 2017. Congress would then have to pass another wartime supplemental bill to pay for the wars after April.

IT Modernization: Federal Chief Information Officer Tony Scott has spent much of the last year talking about this systemic problem. OMB submitted a proposal to Congress in the fiscal 2017 budget request for a one-time influx of money to give agencies the boost they need to break the cycle of supporting old IT systems year-after-year.

Then, over the summer, Rep. Will Hurd (R-Texas) responded with an alternative proposal, the Modernizing Obsolete and Vulnerable Enterprise IT, or MOVE-IT, Act. In September, Hurd merged the two proposals into the Modernizing Government Technology Act, which passed the House in September.

The bill now sits in the Senate, where it's been referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. The Professional Services Council sent a letter to Senate leadership on Nov. 4 urging them to take up this legislation during the lame duck session.

Veterans Affairs Reform: Both chambers of Congress also need to reconcile different versions of reform bills for the Veterans Affairs Department.

The House has passed some VA reform legislation, such as the VA Accountability First and Appeals Modernization Act, which some groups have praised for its whistleblower protections, but others have criticized.

"This legislation suggests more of an interest in the appearance of reforming the VA workforce than a real commitment to undertaking the hard work of understanding what the real problems are, working with stakeholders to craft a solution and holding parties responsible to see improvements through to a conclusion," then-SEA Interim President Jason Briefel wrote in a Sept. 13 letter to House lawmakers.

However, the Senate has yet to take it up. Meanwhile, the Senate's own effort at VA reform, the Veterans First Act, has been delayed. Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) attributed this to the size and scope of the bill.

Postal Reform: In June, Members of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee produced a postal reform bill intended to "ensure the efficient and affordable nationwide delivery of mail," by giving the agency more flexibility for product development, consolidation of mail delivery and agency oversight, and most notably, addresses the pre-funded healthcare mandate.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

The bill was referred to the House Subcommittee on Health in July, where it still sits.

Hearings on Federal Long-Term Care premium hikes: In July, feds discovered that premiums for the Federal Long-Term Care Insurance Program would be rising by an average of 83 percent. Immediately, both feds and lawmakers began demanding explanations.

House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) sent a letter on Aug. 24 to Craig Bromley, president of John Hancock Financial Services, asking for information on the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program. Ranking Member Elijah Cummings (D-Md.) and Reps. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.) and Gerald Connolly (D-Va.) co-signed the letter.

Connolly's office said in an email that while there are no concrete plans to hold hearings yet, they hope to hear something soon.



NARFE-PAC

Not much new since the 7th quarter figures came out in October. I did receive a copy of a check that was sent to "People for Ben" (Ben Ray Lujan) on October 13, 2016. The check was for \$2,500.00 and brings the total of NARFE-PAC donations to him for 2015/2016 to \$7,500.

Thank you for your donations to NARFE-PAC.

Linda Clark
NM NARFE-PAC Coordinator

WISHING NARFE MEMBERS A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS



AND A HAPPY, HEALTHY NEW YEAR

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Sharon Willoughby, Las Cruces

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Solveiga Unger, PRP retired

The next Federation Executive Board Meeting will be January 26, 11:00 am at the Bodega Burger, Socorro, NM

Let's make **NARFE** a household word in every Federal Government Employee's domain! Members need to get excited about what **NARFE** is doing for THEM!

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