

VOICES

December, 2020

I hope that all of you are staying safe and avoiding contact with anyone that has Covid-19. This virus is taking a toll on our emotional well-being as we are unable to meet with family and friends. I truly hope that a good virus, made in the USA, is available soon. The shutdown of our State has caused numerous chapters to curtail meetings and boards are less likely to meet. This is the case with your Federation Board. We do communicate frequently by phone and email.

CHAPTERS: The summer has been very bad for our chapters. We closed Chapter 698, Alamogordo, June 4, 2020 and Chapter 1380, Gallup, July 22, 2020. Members moved to other chapter or stayed as National members in our NM National Division.

DUES: As a result of voting for B-2020 we will have a dues increase. Effective 1 January 2021 dues will be \$48.00 plus Chapter dues, if you belong to a chapter.

The new language in the bylaws will read:

Members shall pay dues of \$48 for one year, \$92 for two years, and \$126 for three years. For dues withholding annual dues are \$42. The NEB shall also establish an amount to pay all future dues in full. Such members who pay all future dues in full shall be called life members. All funds derived from membership fees and dues shall be used only to support association objectives.

The current “dues withholding” is \$34.00 (plus chapter dues), which equates to \$2.83 per month (plus your chapter dues). The new “dues withholding” rate will be \$42 annually (plus chapter dues), which equates to \$3.50 per month (plus chapter dues).

NARFE members whose memberships expire after December 31, 2020, are encouraged to **save money by calling 800-456-8410 (press 1 for membership) and renew their annual membership now for one year at the current dues rate of \$40.** To save even more, members who currently pay the one-year rate can extend to a two- or three-year membership at the current dues rates of \$72 or \$102, respectively.

Current “life members” dues will not change, only if their chapter dues change. The amounts for new life members, beginning January 1, will be determined using actuarial tables. They must be approved by the NEB before publication sometime after January 1. The current table for determining the dues is below.

Ages	Single Payment	Quarterly Installment
30-39	\$ 1,796.00	\$ 450.25
40-50	1,408.00	353.25
51-55	1,127.00	283.00
56-60	960.00	241.25
61-65	801.00	201.50
66-70	653.00	164.50
71-75	514.00	129.75
76-80	392.00	99.25
81-90	251.00	64.00
91-100	127.00	33.00

Members may want to consider the life membership prior to December 31st as dues will be going up, but we do not know how much.

NEW MEXICO FEDERATION CONFERENCE: It is unknown at this time if we will be able to hold a conference in person.

If there is a vaccine for COVID-19 Taos Chapter has graciously offered to hold the conference. More info to follow in the next few months. A decision will be made by 31 March 2021 on our Conference.

There are items that must be handled prior to the conference, even if one is not held in person. Please note the following:

Bylaws/Resolutions. This committee is being chaired by Gary Montoya, 575-894-3373, email gmont@windstream.net . Submissions for changes are to be sent to Gary by 1 February 2021. The forms for submission will be mailed to Chapter Presidents and Secretaries. If anyone wants a personal copy please send me a request by email to sreese346@gmail.com or phone 575-649-6035.

Nominating Committee/chair. I am looking for volunteers for the nominating committee as well as a chair. If you would be willing to volunteer please let me know by email sreese346@gmail.com or phone 575-649-6035. This committee needs to be in place by 1 January 2021.

Voting: all voting for Bylaw/Resolutions and Federation Officers will take place 1 March through 31 March 2021 electronically or hard ballot. Information will be forthcoming on this process.

I welcome National members to participate in the Bylaws/Resolutions and the Nominating Committee. The work on these committees will undoubtedly be handled by email and/or phone.

Hoping everyone had a safe and Happy Thanksgiving. Sharon

ADVOCACY UPDATE

By Mark Mickelsen, Federation Exec. VP for Advocacy

The November 2020 Election has brought about some changes in the New Mexico Congressional Delegation, and therefore some corresponding changes in our New Mexico NARFE members serving as Congressional District Liaisons (CDLs) and Senatorial Liaisons (SLs). Here is an overview of those changes:

--Lorna Howerton of the Albuquerque Chapter will continue to serve as CDL for Democratic Rep. Debra Haaland of the 1st Congressional District, who won re-election over her Republican challenger Michelle Garcia Holmes;

--Judy Rosco of the Las Cruces Chapter will continue to serve as CDL for the 2nd Congressional District, but will now be our liaison to the newly elected Republican Rep. Yvette Herrell, who unseated the Democratic incumbent, Xochitl Torres-Small;

--Bill Britton of the Santa Fe Chapter will continue to serve as CDL for the 3rd Congressional District but will now be our liaison to the newly elected Democratic Rep. Teresa Leger Fernandez, who won the open seat over the Republican candidate Alexis Johnson. The seat was open because the previous Rep., Democrat Ben Ray Lujan, vacated it to run for the U.S. Senate. He won election to the Senate over Republican Mark Ronchetti.

--Senator-elect Ben Ray Lujan is taking the place of outgoing Democratic Senator Tom Udall. Mary Ellen McKay of the Las Cruces Chapter was the SL for Senator Udall, but with his retirement she has also decided to retire from being an SL. Thank you, Mary Ellen, for all your dedicated work as an SL!

--Mark Mickelsen of the Santa Fe Chapter has been serving as the SL to Democratic Senator Martin Heinrich, who was reelected in 2018 to another six-year term. Mark wants to continue as an SL but since we now have an SL vacancy, he is open to serving either for Sen. Heinrich or Sen. Lujan, considering that he has had contacts with both Sen. Heinrich's staff, and with Sen. Lujan's previous House staff as Mark worked closely with Lujan CDL Bill Britton. The bottom line is, we are asking for a volunteer to serve as the other SL to one of our two Senators. If you are interested, please contact Mark Mickelsen at email mmickelsen@aol.com or by telephone at (720) 205-0251. No experience is necessary. Mark will work with you and the resources of the Federation will be available to help you succeed in this important work. We appreciate the vital work of our CDLs and SLs in ensuring that our Congressional Delegation is aware of our issues and engaged in the effort to preserve and enhance our earned benefits. We will keep you all informed of our progress and activities! Feel free to contact Mark Mickelsen, your local CDL, or your Chapter Legislative VP/Liaison for any questions or requests for more information on our issues.

In other Advocacy news:

--given the change in the Presidency stemming from the Nov. election results, we may experience a delay in the issuance of the President's FY 2022 Budget Request that normally comes out around the time of the President's State of the Union address to the joint session of Congress around the end of January. That budget request will give us our first clues as to the new Administration's position on any Federal employee-retiree issues. After that, Congress will begin its own budgeting process and reviews that may affect our benefits. It may be that dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic may take initial priority over everything else. Time will tell. We will keep you posted and will call on you to mobilize and contact our Senators and Representatives if needed. In the meantime, please continue to read the Advocacy updates on the narfe.org website, as well as register on the

website for NARFE HQ Advocacy email updates to be sent to you. If you have any immediate concerns that you feel need to be addressed by our Congressional Delegation, you can email our two U.S. Senators and your U.S. Representative on their respective websites.

--we are still pursuing options to support previous efforts in the New Mexico Legislature aimed at exempting Social Security benefits from state taxation. Given the state budget crisis due to COVID, this may be a heavy lift in the upcoming legislative session in January-February. We will keep you posted!

Thank you to all our members for your willingness to be engaged in the important effort to advocate for preserving and enhancing our earned benefits. Please let us know how we in Federation Advocacy can better serve you!

Membership VP Report – November 2020

Well, as your VP for membership, I'm willing to bet that all readers are as unhappy with 2020 as I am. But, thankfully, as I hope all of you are, I am healthy as you read this. I am disappointed to tell you that membership recruitment has all but been "on hold" since the pandemic began in middle March.

I live in an area of New Mexico where there are few federal employment offices but when the opportunity has been available I have done what I could to recruit. I was successful in recruiting two individuals this year and am grateful for that.

Open Season for our health benefits is November 7 thru December 14, 2020. As there will be no health fairs this year, there is not the opportunity to meet face to face with potential members. However, there are sites available on [NARFE.org](https://www.narfe.org) that potential members may access to learn about the different plans available. By making these known where you have the opportunity, it just might bring in a new member.

Have a safe and healthy rest of the year and I hope, as I know you all do, for a better 2021!

Since my last report we have had very little action in our financial department. As of May 1st we had a balance on hand of 21,889.07. We have had expenditures of \$133.04 and deposits of \$7,742.04. It should be noted that with the closure of Chapter 698 we received \$874.35 and Chapter 1380 we received \$3,994.71. Our balance on hand as of November 1st is \$29, 510.27.

Please add this to your Secretary/Treasury Report for Voices.

Thanks,
Marlene Mayfield