



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



Voices



October 2019 Issue

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

VOICES is back! Thank you, Marian Thornton, for volunteering again to be the editor. We plan to distribute VOICES by email, posting on the Federation Website, and mailing a hard copy to each Chapter President and Secretary. The Chapters can determine how to provide non electronic members the newsletter. The easiest way would be to include VOICES with your Chapter Newsletter.

The AMS is still not functioning the way it should. The field needs to be diligent in handling chapter and federation business. The contractor is working on the top 6 items identified by the NEB and Headquarters. I forwarded an update to every Chapter President and Secretary on October 5th. Please check with your officers for the latest. Hopefully all 6 of the top priorities will be completed by the end of the year.

As of October 3rd, we have 10 Chapters with a total of 966 members and the National Division with 939 members. Las Vegas Chapter 886, 9 members, is in the process of closing. Frances Casey the long time Chapter President moved to Boise, ID to be closer to her daughter. Members are currently deciding which chapter to move their membership to. This process will be completed prior to the end of the year.

The new “Shop NARFE” store should be open by the time you receive this newsletter. They should have several items featuring our new logo. Remember, we are strongly suggesting table covers/cloths in lieu of banners. This is due to the fact that most meeting venues will not allow placing banners on the walls. Which, in turn, would require a stand-alone stand for the banner. You might want to keep the old logo banner for historical purposes. This is strictly up to your chapter.

Northern Annual Meeting and Southern Annual Meeting: The Northern Annual Meeting will consist of Gallup, Taos, Santa Fe, Albuquerque and Tucumcari. The Southern Annual will consist of Roswell, Truth or Consequences, Alamogordo and Las Cruces. Thank you to Taos Chapter 1401 for volunteering to host the Northern Annual Meeting:

We are looking at late March or April for these meetings. I would like for the Southern Chapters to discuss hosting this important meeting and let me know who would like to host this one-day event. Also, if there is any specific training/information you would like at the annual meeting please send them to me. I want this to be informative and interactive with members.

Chapters still have the opportunity to submit amendments to a bylaw or standing rule for the 2020 election year, it is due no later than January 1, 2020. Resolutions that meet the deadline will be entered in the log in the Office of the Secretary/Treasurer (NS/T) as they are received and, if complete, forwarded to the Bylaws and Resolutions Committee (BRC). With the passage of all the 2019 referendums you may want some changes. I am very concerned that members are not/will not be heard.

NARFE Bylaw Article IX, Section 1 as amended in 2018 specifies that amendments for the bylaws and standing rules can be submitted by any of the following groups:

20 members direct to National Headquarters

Chapter direct to National Headquarters

Chapter via a federation

Federation executive board direct to National Headquarters

Federation voting to National Headquarters

National Executive Board

A Committee designated by the NEB

The BRC is authorized to place amendments that meet the F-3C format on the 2020 ballot. For additional information regarding the amendments process, contact the Office of the Secretary/Treasurer at resbylaws@narfe.org.

If you have any questions regarding any of the above please feel free to contact me.

Sharon

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!

REPORT ON FEDERATION ADVOCACY EFFORTS

OCTOBER 2019

By Mark Mickelsen

Executive VP for Advocacy

Our Congressional District Liaisons (CDLs) and Senatorial Liaisons (SLs) have been very active in the second half of 2019 in meeting with or contacting our Representatives and Senators regarding protecting and enhancing our earned benefits. A special thanks to them! In addition, we highly appreciate the efforts of our NARFE members in contacting these officials on behalf of NARFE's Legislative Program.

From late July through September, the CDLs and SLs held a number of meetings with our Federal elected officials or attended their Town Halls. Here's what we have to report to you:

In late July Mark Mickelsen, SL for Senator Heinrich, met with Alex Eubanks, one of Senator Heinrich's senior staff, in Albuquerque. They discussed the following issues, in which Mr. Eubanks expressed Sen. Heinrich's support for Federal employees and retirees:

Opposition to cuts to our earned benefits (including how our retirement system is funded and why the proposed cuts would not save money and do not make sense);
Postal Reform without harm to current or future postal workers and retirees;
Fair COLAs for Federal Retirees and Equal COLAs for CSRS and FERS Retirees (asking Sen. Heinrich to support similar bills that may be introduced in the Senate); and,
A fair pay raise for Federal Employees, e.g., a 3.1 percent raise next year.

In August Lorna Howerton, CDL for Rep. Debra Haaland of the New Mexico 1st Congressional District, invited Brenda McKenna to attend the Albuquerque Chapter's August Meeting on August 4. Ms. McKenna explained her role as a constituent advocate in Rep. Haaland's office, and then explained Rep. Haaland's support of Federal Employees and Retirees since being elected in 2018. She stated that Rep. Haaland supports adequate pay for Federal Employees, ensuring that Federal Employees have excellent working conditions and opportunities, which will also help to recruit the best and brightest for Federal service. She also stated that Rep. Haaland was extremely pleased to have met in April in her Washington, DC Office with the New Mexico NARFE Delegation who attended the 2019 NARFE National Legislative Conference. Ms. McKenna then presented information to the Chapter about upcoming Town Halls and Constituent Coffees with Rep. Haaland in Albuquerque, Los Lunas, and Moriarty. She also stated that Rep. Haaland supports NARFE's positions on preserving and enhancing our earned benefits.

In August Bill Britton, CDL for Rep. Ben Ray Lujan of the New Mexico 3rd Congressional District, and Mark Mickelsen met with Eric Chavez, Field Representative for Rep. Lujan. Bill and Mark presented NARFE's positions on the following NARFE priorities:

Fighting efforts to eliminate COLAs for FERS Retirees and reducing CSRS COLAs by 0.5 percent;

- Opposing a proposal to eliminate the FERS Annuity Supplement for new FERS retirees;
- Opposing moving from the High-3 retirement formula to the High-5;
- Opposing reducing the rate of return on the TSP's G Fund;
- Opposing the President's proposed 2020 pay freeze for Federal Employees;
- Opposing increasing Federal Employee payroll contributions toward retirement by up to 6 percent with no corresponding increase in benefits;

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- Supporting moving the COLA Index from the inadequate CPI-W Index to the CPI-E Index;
- Supporting the Equal COLA Act that would provide FERS retirees with the same COLA as CSRS retirees;
- Supporting A 3.1 percent pay raise for Federal Employees; and,
- Supporting Bills to mitigate the effects of the unfair Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) on CSRS retirees.

In August 1, Judy Rosco, CDL for New Mexico Congressional District 2, and Mark Mickelsen met with Rep. Xochitl Torres-Small and her Field Representative Ashley Beyer (Judy in person and Mark patched in by phone) at the Congresswoman's Las Cruces Office. They presented NARFE's positions on the same issues outlined above in the paragraph about Mark's visit with Alex Eubanks of Sen. Heinrich's staff. Mark presented specific information about how our retirement system is funded and why the Administration's cuts are damaging to Federal Employees and Retirees and do not represent real savings. Rep. Torres-Small was receptive and asked a number of good questions regarding the rationale of those seeking to impose the cuts, and why they make no fiscal sense. With this discussion, Mark has now presented this to all five members of the New Mexico Congressional Delegation. Judy also presented information on the issues of fair and equal COLAs for retirees. Rep. Torres-Small is very supportive of the Federal Employee/Retiree Community and has voted in favor of NARFE issues.

Judy and Mary Ellen McKay, SL for Senator Udall, invited Rep. Torres-Small or one of her staff and Sen. Udall or one of his Las Cruces staff to attend the Las Cruces Chapter's Legislative Breakfast in September. Rep. Torres-Small attended and stated her support for Federal Employees and Retirees, including preserving our earned benefits. In addition, other members of the Las Cruces Chapter attended a Town Hall meeting of Rep. Torres-Small and talked with her at that event.

NARFE-PAC at NARFE Headquarters in the Washington, DC Area has also evaluated our New Mexico candidates for Federal office, and in 2019 they awarded some NARFE-PAC funds to two of them: to Rep. Ben Ray Lujan (now running in 2020 for a US Senate seat being vacated by Sen. Udall, who is retiring), and to Rep. Xochitl Torres-Small.

There have been two bills introduced in the US House of Representatives to reduce the effects of the WEP. The first was a bill—HR 3934, the Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act—introduced in July 2019 by Rep. Kevin Brady (R-Texas) that would provide a monthly rebate of \$100 to those affected by WEP, and \$50 per month for those receiving Social Security based on their spouse's employment. Going forward, the bill would replace the current WEP formula with a less damaging one. NARFE supports the bill and urges us to contact our Reps to co-sponsor and support it. Then on Sept. 27, 2019, Rep. Richard Neal (D-Massachusetts) introduced a bill—HR 4540, the Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act—that would provide current Social Security beneficiaries affected by WEP (and future ones turning 62 before 2022) with an increase of \$150 per month in their Social Security benefit. NARFE also supports this bill and urges us to contact our Reps to urge them to co-sponsor and support the bill.



Membership Report

Happy Fall, all! It's that time of year again when recruitment and membership drives are so very important. This year I'm sure you all know about the contest that is ongoing and that all recruiters are eligible to receive \$10 for each new member recruited through December 31. I earlier sent each Chapter a reminder of this event and want to again emphasize the importance of increasing our membership statewide. We are an aging organization and must strive to impress current employees with the need to increase our numbers.

As of October 5, 2019 Headquarters reports that the current numbers of members in the New Mexico Federation are:

Chapters - 966, National Members – 939, with a combined total of 1,905.

The upcoming health fairs are a great place to make current employees aware of the many reasons to join NARFE, and how the organization works so diligently to protect the benefits of both current and retired federal employees.

I will soon be sending each chapter a copy of the health fair schedules and ask that each chapter try to have a member attend and promote our organization and the importance of joining! Many current employees are unaware that they need not wait until they retire to join. I would also like to know the number of M-2 cards you are able to obtain from prospective members.

The July 2019 NARFE Insider explains the many “perks” available to members as well as ways to enhance your recruitment techniques. It also explains how each recruiter is eligible for monthly prizes during the contest and the opportunity to win a Kindle Fire, the grand prize.

I hope you will be able to participate in this membership drive and I wish you luck with the contest!!

– Elizabeth (Betty) Hicks, VP – Membership

NEW MEXICO FEDERATION TREASURER'S REPORT

As of September 30, 2019

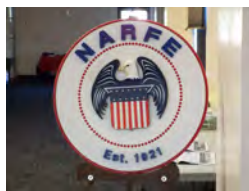
The New Mexico Federation of NARFE since May 1, 2019, has had income of \$2,281.03. This is made up of \$1,793.86 of 10% monies forwarded from headquarters for dues paid by membership and \$487.17 which was 25% of Federation and Region VII Conferences profits.

The Federation has had expenses of \$1,458.74. This includes Federation Board meetings, President's visits to chapters, National Federations Presidents' meeting and office expenses.

The Federation, as of September 20, 2019, has \$17,872.31 in the bank, all of which is in a checking account available for use.

The account is maintained via computer program “Quicken” and is reconciled monthly. The monies are deposited with Wells Fargo Bank without any monthly charges.

Submitted by Lee M. Tomlin, Treasurer



Out with the old - In with the new!



New Mexico Federation of Chapters - Officers for 2018 thru 2020

PRESIDENT

Sharon Reese (cell) 575-649-6035
1625 Thunderbird St
Las Cruces, NM 88011
Email: sreese346@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE VP for Legislation

Mark Mickelsen (cell) 720-205-0251
505 Landing Ct NE
Rio Rancho, NM 87124-1491
Email: mmickelsen@aol.com

VICE PRESIDENT for Membership

Elizabeth (Betty) Hicks 575-622-5558
6 Forest Drive
Roswell, NM 88203-2606
Email: skeethicks@aol.com

SECRETARY

Marlene Mayfield (cell) 575-644-6851
P. O. Box 2640
Mesilla Park, NM 88047
Email: marlene.mayfield@gmail.com

TREASURER

Lee Tomlin 505-797-9711
9804 Lorelei Lane NE (cell)
505-238-7319
Albuquerque, NM 87111-1248
Email: ltomlin7@comcast.net

Marian Thornton, Editor (Chapter 1341)
PO Box 975
Williamsburg, NM 87942
575-405-9173
Email: mdtcat@gmail.com

Standing Appointments

NARFE-PAC:

Linda Clark, Alamogordo

Alzheimers:

Vacant

VOICES Editor:

Marian Thornton, Williamsburg

Webmaster:

Jeffrey Smith, Las Cruces

Federation Service Officer:

Jim Kielty, Las Cruces

Auditor:

Sharon Willoughby, Las Cruces

Parliamentarian:

Solveiga Unger, PRP retired

The NMEB will be meeting in Santa Fe in conjunction with visits at the Round House. The date has not been finalized but will be during the legislative session. Date and time TBA

NARFE -- The "E" is Silent, but "WE" are not!