



**NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED  
FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION  
PUTNAM COUNTY—COOKEVILLE TENNESSEE  
Our 25th Year: 1983-2008**

**Chapter 1956 Newsletter**

**September 2008**

**Last Meeting**

We had a great turnout at our August meeting, there were 34 members and guests in attendance. Thanks for your support of our meetings. The speaker for the evening was Lt. Robert "R C" Christian, Safety Education Officer with the Tennessee Highway Patrol, Cookeville District. He gave us a quiz outlining the difficulties of driving especially as we grow older. He stressed the proper way to wear a seat belt and gave us many ways to help us in our driving. There were many questions from the group.

We were pleased to meet more of our members attending for the first time, Dorothy Young, Mary Sue Wood and Waymon Roberts. We appreciate them coming all the way from Smithville and Livingston and hope to see them again.

We spend a considerable length of time discussing some of the many resolutions to be considered at the National Convention in September (by the time some of you read this, I will be in Louisville KY for the convention) These are very important issues that we needed to discuss so that I would have a sense of which way to vote and better represent you as members. Thank you for your patience as we took time for this. Remember, our purpose is to keep NARFE strong and effective in protecting our interests. The discussion centered on the following resolutions; One Member One Vote which we will oppose, Create Single Dues/Association Dues which we will oppose unless it is modified to remove the 'current member grandfathered in' clause, Discontinue honorary members which we will oppose, Establish free spousal membership no vote taken and expanding membership eligibility which we will support. We also discussed the candidates running for National Officers.

**Next Meeting**

Please mark on your calendar the next meeting which will be September 16th. As usual the location is Shoney's Restaurant on Jefferson Ave. in Cookeville. We meet at 6:00 pm. for the meal and the business meeting will begin by 6:45 pm. Our speaker for September will be our very own Dick Armstrong that many of you know. He is also very involved with the Mended Hearts Organization and will be speaking to

us about that. I am sure this will be a very good group to learn about. Do plan on attending. Guest and family members are welcome to attend, if you need a ride to the meeting, tell your telephone caller or call me and we will try to work out something.

**Membership Report**

The past month the latest report we received from Headquarters showed that one member who moved to Wisconsin several months ago, Charlie Bringman has transferred his membership. We wish him the best in his new chapter. Two of our members were sent a second dues notice, Nick Chronis and Joe Dietz. We encourage these to renew and continue to help us help them.

**Sunshine Report**

It was mentioned Joan Oswalt and Jim Evans are still recovering from medical problems. Also Paul Burgess is not well. Telephone Callers, be sure to ask if any member is not well or is hospitalized and about any family deaths and pass that information to our Sunshine Chairman or to me. This is very important.

**Region X Retention Committee**

I had the privilege to attend a workshop with a group of representatives from each of the Federations in Region X. The purpose of the meeting was to develop a plan to help us chapters retain our members. While it is true that we are gaining new members continually, we are also losing members who fail to renew. This is a problem nationwide and is affecting our ability to be effective in keeping our Representatives and Senators

*- - continued on back*

**Chapter Officers**

President	Ronnie Collins
Vice-President	Ellis McCowan
Secretary	Elizabeth Bryant
Treasurer	Jim Evans

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responsive to our concerns and fight to protect our interests. For years we have been focusing on trying to gain new members which is good and should be continued, but now we need to place equal emphases on retention of current members. If NARFE is going to survive and even grow we need to do all that we can to accomplish both.

### **Why Do Members Not Renew?**

In this space, I will briefly outline the top reasons why our members say they did not renew. This is taken from the August issue of the *Recruiter's Journal*. If you want more of the responses, just ask.

**Reason 1** "NARFE has not lived up to its promises, e.g., eliminating the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO), getting Premium Conversion passed.

Response NARFE has lived up to its promises. It has helped protect and keep our current benefits. While it is true that we have not been successful in gaining those items listed above, we have not lost any benefits. That is very important. In the private sector, many employees and retirees have had benefits to be cut and even eliminated. Through the work of NARFE, we have not lost anything! NARFE has placed a priority on getting our bills passed in Congress, but it has never promised that it would be done. That is where we come in, remember Congress only listens if we have sufficient member support of these priorities. Keep this in mind, who else besides NARFE works to protect the benefits of federal employees and retirees?

**Reason 2** "The chapter meetings are boring and a waste of time. It's a social club for old people"

Response I can't speak for all chapters, but in our chapter we constantly endeavor to involve our members in the chapter meetings and ask for their input in selecting programs, speakers and organizing our events. We have both time to discuss NARFE business and spend time with one another. We are always open and willing to listen to your ideals on how to make our chapter meetings more interesting. If you have suggestions, just pass them on to me or another chapter officer.

**Reason 3** "NARFE dues are too high for what you get"

Response Our dues are structured, part of our dues goes to the National organization where it is used to protect our federal annuity and health insurance program and part of our dues go to local chapter to offset our costs, fund our programs and with the help of our federation train future leaders and more. NARFE offers several ways to reduce membership dues, such as joining for multiple years and using dues withholding. Dues can be as low as 10 cents a day, what else can you get for that little of price? The

magazine alone is worth the membership dues and the member discounts more than make up the cost of membership. I don't see how anyone can say that our dues are too high.

**Reason 4** "Chapter members were cold and distant. I felt unwelcome"

Response In our chapter we try to make it a point to welcome meet and greet each member and guest to our meetings. New members are introduced. We offer to provide transportation to fellow members and encourage member participation. Do make it a point to welcome those who are new to our meetings and let us know what more we can do.

**Reason 5** "If I could become a national only member and get the magazine, I'd rejoin NARFE. That is all I want"

Response Currently all members are required by our bylaws to belong to a chapter. That may change in the future, but chapter members are the lifeblood of our organization and we would have a difficult time accomplishing our goals without chapters. It is through chapters that information is shared and Responses are worked on.

**Reason 6** "In this day of the internet, Chapters are not needed"

Response While the internet is a very useful tool, it cannot replace the one on one contact that we get as meeting as a chapter.

**Reason 7** "I'm too busy. My schedule conflicts with chapter meetings."

Response Many chapters hold there meetings in the middle of the day, but we hold our meetings in the evening so that our many working members can attend. This makes it possible for active federal employees and those retired members who went back to work after retirement. We also hold our special events like the summer picnic and Christmas banquet on Saturdays when most members can attend. Remember we are here for you and most people do find time for those things that are truly important.

### **NARFE IS ON THE WEB**

Chapter 1956: [www.narfecookevilletn.org](http://www.narfecookevilletn.org)

Tennessee Federation: [www.narfetn.org](http://www.narfetn.org)

NARFE Headquarters: [www.narfe.org](http://www.narfe.org)

Lots of information is available on our the NARFE websites, information about chapter meetings, newsletters, legislative news, photos, current membership lists. You can update your mailing address, phone numbers, email addresses. Download and print forms and other files. Renew your membership, and more. Check it out, if you don't have access to a computer at home, a family member, friend or the local library can help you with this.