



**NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED  
FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION  
PUTNAM COUNTY—COOKEVILLE TENNESSEE  
\*\*NARFE Works For You\*\***

**Chapter 1956 Newsletter**

**April 2012**

**Notes From Last Meeting**

Once again the speaker at the last meeting was Nancy Rich who talked to us about spring gardening. She mentioned that with the mild winter that we had, plants are waking up early and everything is blooming early. Not only that but bugs, insects, and ticks will be multiplied this year.

Nancy said that now is the time to weed flower gardens and gave us some tips when it comes to feeding and fertilizing the gardens. Also she showed an invention that she came up with to apply herbicide to spot areas that will not kill the good plants.

In closing, Nancy told us of a program that the Master Gardens are promoting to introduce gardening to more people. The program is called Realizing Economic Agricultural Potential R.E.A.P. For \$5 people can get a Garden Kit which contains seeds, planning plans, and soil materials that will reap \$100 in fresh produce. There are 3 gardens in the kit, Spring, Summer and Fall. Anyone can purchase these kits, but the Master Gardeners are asking for donations so that they can give these kits to the Habitat Program. She said to purchase or donate, just go by the UT Extension Office on Walnut Avenue in Cookeville. They will be available till the end of April.

In other news from the last meeting, we talked about the latest news coming out of Washington DC that affects those of us working for or retired from federal government, went over the officer reports and took up donations for NARFE-PAC. Thanks to those who either gave me their donations or mailed it in to headquarters.

I also asked for comments and received input on the 3 proposed Resolutions and Bylaws changes which have been submitted to our NARFE Federation Convention coming up this month.

**No Meeting This Month**

Remember that April is Convention Month in our state and since the dates fall on the same date as our regular meeting, we do not have a monthly meeting in April. Reba and myself will be attending as chapter delegates this year. I hope that in years to come others of you will take part in this.

Next meeting will be May 15th. It is always encouraging to have good attendance. Plan on coming.

Please share these newsletters with your spouse

**Legislative Report**

The legislative staff at headquarters have been very active lately monitoring all the proposed legislation in Congress that could result in cuts to federal employees or retirees. NARFE's stand has always been to be part of a 'shared sacrifice' as cuts are truly needed. But to single out the federal workforce and retirees is not acceptable.

This newsletter will get to you after Congress returns to Washington from the Easter recess when they spend time in their districts, please remember that whenever you have the opportunity to meet your Representative or Senators at some local event, relay to them any concerns that you have on federal spending cuts and its affect on the federal groups.

As some of you know, NARFE sends out a weekly Legislative Update when Congress is in session. This hotline message is sent by email to all members that have their email addresses listed in the member records. Some of you have email accounts, but you are not getting these messages either because your email address is not listed or you have an old address on file. I would like to update your records with your current address. **Please let me know if this is acceptable with you, just respond by email to me.** You can update your member records on NARFE's website or call them at 1-800-456-8410. Do so today.

For those who do not have email, you can still get these weekly legislative messages by telephone. Call the Hotline number, 1-877-217-8234 and you can hear a recorded message each week.

In the latest news, Obama signs a short-term high-way bill in which no federal retirement changes are included. However, this is a stop-gap measure that delays a more comprehensive bill that does include changes to federal retirement benefits.

**Chapter Officers**

President	Ronnie Collins
Vice-President	Betty Robinson
Secretary	Reba Collins
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## Membership News

I continue to monitor our latest information in regards to our membership reports. One thing that helps those of us who chapter leaders is; NARFE Headquarters is constantly working to improve the timeliness and quality of the information it delivers to federation and chapter officers. For several years, it has offered monthly membership and financial reports through the website. Now in addition to the online reports, NARFE HQ has implemented a new Online Activities Module (OAM), that provides membership information on demand. This sophisticated online service is designed to perform intricate tasks with a simple click of a button.

This is good, but I still need you to do your part and maintain your membership. This is so very important. In order to have an effective voice in Washington DC we need to gain new members and retain all that we currently have.

Recently we had 2 members whose membership expired near the end of 2011 and they failed to renew during the time period that NARFE HQ carries them prior to being dropped. As it turned out, both did renew in the last few weeks, but because HQ had dropped them, they were given a new membership expiration date which is in the year 2012. What this means is, the chapter loses its dues for these members for the year 2011, but we still had the expenses for both members during 2011.

So do help us by not allowing your membership to expire, this hurts you and us.

## FEHBP To Add 10 New Plans

I know it is a long time off before we have to consider health insurance plans for next year. But the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will be adding new plans to the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program. These are unnamed as of yet and I do not know if they will be offered in all areas or not. We may not know until Open Season gets closer.

## Picnic This Year?

We usually have a chapter picnic in June or July. I have mentioned in previous newsletters and at our chapter meetings that I need one or more people to take the responsibility of planning and organizing our social events. This includes our summer picnic and the Christmas luncheon. Time is getting away from us, so let me hear from some willing person this month. Thanks in advance.

It takes many people to run any organization in order to have a success. I appreciate all the help that I get, but I do need more.

**Remember, there is no chapter meeting in April, see all of you in May**

## Content

I am always looking for interesting content for these newsletters. Anytime that you have something to share, let me know, I may just use it!

Here is an article on the subject of health in regards to fabric softeners. Hope it is enlightening.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) have listed dangerous petrochemicals found in many fragrant but dangerous fabric softeners. Here are some of them:

- Benzyl Acetate: Linked to pancreatic cancer, this is also a potential eye and respiratory irritant. It is absorbed through the skin and can also cause coughing.
- Benzyl Alcohol: An upper respiratory tract irritant, benzyl alcohol can result in central nervous system problems, headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness and dramatic blood pressure plummeting.
- Ethyl Acetate: On the EPA's Hazardous Waste list, ethyl acetate is listed as a narcotic. It can damage the liver and kidneys, is an eye and respiratory tract irritant, and can spark headaches as well as anemia with leukocytosis.
- Chloroform: Joining the ranks of the EPA's Hazardous Waste list, chloroform is a carcinogen and anesthetic that can cause headaches, nausea, vomiting, drowsiness, loss of consciousness and respiratory tract irritation. It's especially a problem when it's heated up.
- Limonene: This one's a known carcinogen that can also irritate the eyes and skin.

There are more chemicals listed, but I did not have space to include. Chemicals like these have a greater impact on the very young and older individuals. You have alternate choices, consider this list of things that would avoid these chemicals. That way you can avoid the fragrant, yet dangerous effects of most fabric softeners on the market.

- Check out your local stores for natural alternatives that don't use chemicals.
- Throw in ¼ cup of baking soda to your wash cycle to soften your laundry.
- Add ¼ cup of white vinegar to your wash or rinse cycle to soften your clothes.
- Use an outdoor clothesline (or string one up inside) to dry your clothes.
- Install a water softener if you don't have one.

## Thanks for you support of NARFE

### 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)