

Monthly Notes

Welcome to another issue of our chapter newsletter. Time continues to move on and we are in the middle of spring. Time to cut grass and tend the gardens. For me tax season has come to an end which gives more time to do other necessary things.

The Tennessee Federation Annual Meeting took place in Lebanon TN on April 17-18, 2023. While I was not able to attend, I will report on what I know. Several speakers reported and addresses issues with those in attendance; some in person, some by online video. These included William (Bill) Shackelford-National President, Johann DeCastro-Acting CEO, John Hatten-Legislative Director, Robert Allen-Region X Vice President, Donna Shackelford-Region X Alzheimer's Chairman.

There were 19 Tennessee attendees and the 5 speakers who gave reports. I am sure there were many ideas and thoughts shared among the chapters members and the federation officers that will carry forward and be of help.

This year the two trophies were presented for the winners of the Weida White Tolley Alzheimer's award and the Leo Potts NARFE-PAC award. These have not been presented since the 2019 Meeting due to the meetings were online and not in person. This year the Dickson Chapter won the Alzheimer's award and the Tri-County Chapter won the NARFE-PAC award.

I do not know of any business conducted other than re-elect the existing federation officers who agreed to continue serving. More news and information will be included in the next federation newsletter in July.

The Latest Chapter Financial Report .

March beginning balance—\$1583.96
Dues received —\$36.00

Disbursements—none
March ending balance—\$1619.96

Change in Newsletter Format

With this issue of the newsletter I am changing the format that those who receive it by email get. In the past it came in what is called HTML format. To save me some work it will now come as an attachment in PDF format. It will be the same as the mailed copy that is sent. There should be not be any problems with the change as most computers should open the attachment. If you have problems, please let me know.

COLA Watch for 2024

Another month of reporting the Consumer Price Index CPI-W. And again this month, we see an increase in prices which indicates inflation is still with us and does not seem to be going away.

As of the latest report, the index stands at an increase of 1.40 percent towards next year's adjustment.

Month	Month % Change	% Toward 2024
October 2022	+0.40	+0.38
November 2022	-0.17	+0.20
December 2022	-0.49	-0.29
January 2023	+0.90	+0.57
February 2023	+0.50	+1.10
March 2023	+0.33	+1.40

Latest NARFE Webinar

- **Mid-Career Reality Check: Golden Handcuffs or a Move to the Private Sector?**

Presented on May 17th and available on the NARFE website.

2022 Chapter Audit

Our chapter financial records were recently audited by Roy Byrd, who has done this for several years now.

In his letter to me, he writes: "I have personally audited the financial instruments of NARFE Chapter 1956, Putnam County, TN for the year of 2022 & find everything in perfect order." He goes on to reference details of the opening balance, monthly reports, deposits and disbursements and bank statements.

He added "Myrna Estes, Treasurer, has done an outstanding job as Treasurer for several years and should be commended for her meticulous work."

Our thanks for Roy for his work.

Chapter Officers

President & Newsletter Editor	Ronnie Collins
Vice President	Vacant
Secretary	Reba Collins
Treasurer	Myrna Estes

Contact Information:

NARFE Chapter 1956
118 Ballenger Rd., Carthage TN 37030
E-mail: rwcollins49@gmail.com
Phone or Text: 931-284-4835

When you get your renewal notice, be sure to renew both your National and Chapter Dues.

Legislative Report

The Social Security Fairness Act of 2023 H.R. 82/ S. 597, officially has a majority of support in the House of Representatives. The bill reached 223 cosponsors in early April, marking a significant milestone in the 118th Congress for NARFE's fight to pass the bill into law. However, we still need to accumulate more cosponsors to push the bill to a vote.

[Click here](#) to visit NARFE's Legislative Action Center to send your lawmaker a letter asking them to cosponsor this bill to finally repeal the windfall elimination provision (WEP) and the government pension offset (GPO). Just type in your address and our system will choose the right letter for you to send to your lawmakers.

H.R. 82 is now only 67 cosponsors shy of the 290 cosponsors needed to trigger the House Consensus Calendar rule process that would require either committee advancement or a floor vote. We need your support to get across the finish line, please contact your lawmakers today. It only takes a few minutes of your time.

H.R. 82 has amassed strong congressional support just four short months into this session of Congress, putting pressure on leaders to act. At the same time last session, the House bill had just 129 cosponsors. And as of April 14, H.R. 82 had the 2nd most cosponsors of any bill in Congress. Additionally, the Senate companion bill, S. 597, has reached 37 cosponsors, reflecting steady progress in both chambers..

NARFE National President William "Bill" Shackelford sent a letter to the leaders of the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) requesting support for two NARFE priorities in the fiscal year 2024 (FY24) FSGG appropriations bill. NARFE requested adequate funding for and continued oversight of the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Retirement Services (RS) division's customer service to federal annuitants, and the authorization of a minimum 5.2 percent average federal pay raise for federal employees in 2024.

NARFE remains concerned with the current customer service levels of OPM RS, as members have reported an inability to connect with the division to receive assistance and have described lengthy processing delays for retirement applications, survivor benefits claims and healthcare and other related changes. All told, the situation requires the attention of Congress. Fortunately, lawmakers and OPM recognize NARFE's concerns, as seen in the recent March 9 hearing before the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, which highlighted some of the very issues NARFE seeks to fix. While OPM has offered solutions to ongoing problems,

many of which NARFE agrees with, the fixes will require continued congressional support and funding.

OPM requested funding in its FY24 budget request to move away from slow, paper-based processes and expand its recent online retirement application and utilize a digital case management system. This will allow for case processors to view information more easily and reduce the time necessary to process retirement cases. As part of its strategic objectives, OPM intends to introduce new technologies to improve retirement case management and annuity benefit calculations, enhance the capabilities of OPM's Services Online to increase customer self-service options, and provide training to Retirement Services personnel so that they are better able to support customers. OPM also requested funding to bring on 91 new employees for retirement processing enhancements, which will allow them to reduce backlogs and better serve federal retirees. NARFE called for adequate funding to support these efforts.

NARFE also urged lawmakers to appropriate funds for at least a 4.7 percent across-the-board pay increase, plus a 0.5 percent increase in locality pay for federal employees in its fiscal year 2024 FSGG appropriations bill. This 5.2 percent average pay increase is based on the relevant change in the Employment Cost Index (ECI), which measures the change of private-sector wages and salaries. NARFE believes that this raise, or higher, would ensure the gap between public and private sector pay does not worsen in a time of high inflation and when mission-critical skills gaps persist within the federal government. Current analysis by the Federal Salary Council shows that federal employees are paid 22 percent less than their private-sector counterparts.

NARFE will continue to urge adequate funding and oversight of OPM RS and encourage lawmakers to support a federal employee pay raise.

Chapter Member Loss

James Evans passed away on April 23, 2023. Jim was a long time member of our chapter and a past president. He attended our meetings and was very active. He retired from the IRS.

Jim was 89 years old and lived in Algood. We will miss him greatly. A funeral mass is scheduled for May 15th. at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church. Our deepest condolences go out to LaVerne and family.



NARFE IS ON THE WEB

Chapter 1956: www.narfecookevilletn.org

Tennessee Federation: www.narfetn.org

NARFE Headquarters: www.narfe.org