



TRIAD NARFE NEWS
NARFE Chapters 211,454 and 668
September 2008

Welcome to the NARFE TRIAD News!

This special-edition NARFE Triad News is presented as part of an initiative by the Greensboro, Winston-Salem, and High Point NARFE Chapters. It is hoped that this joint effort, together with the upcoming joint Chapter meeting, will further our goals of attracting new members and retaining existing members. Special thanks to contributors Elaine Hughes (North Carolina Federation President), Betty Whitten (High Point Chapter 668), Roger Quincoses (Winston-Salem Chapter 454), and Jerry Pifer (Greensboro Chapter 211).

Federation President's Message

NC Federation President Elaine Hughes

On behalf of the federation, just a few words to extend my wholehearted congratulation to the Triad chapters, Greensboro, High Point, and Winston-Salem for their joint efforts to address membership recruitment and retention issues. The initiatives of these three chapters have proven to be an inspiration in our on-going struggles to recruit and retain our most valuable resource, our members. These initiatives include this joint chapter newsletter, a joint meeting of the three chapters scheduled for October, and possibly a "mini" pre-retirement seminar scheduled for sometime in the near future. My many thanks to the dedication and on-going support displayed by these joint chapter efforts and the members who have so graciously given of their time, knowledge, and experience.

Joint Chapter Meeting: Oct 9th

Thanks to the efforts of Chapter 668's Betty Whitten, the first joint meeting of the Greensboro, High Point, and Winston-Salem NARFE Chapters will be held next month! The meeting will be Thursday, October 9th at the Golden Corral Buffet at Oak Hollow Mall, located just off Eastchester Drive (NC Highway 68) south of its intersection with Centennial Street. Winston-Salem residents would likely take the new US 311 east to NC 68 while Greensboro residents would probably head west on Wendover to reach its intersection with NC 68. The Mall is about 3.5 miles southwest of the Wendover/NC 68 intersection and about 1.2

miles southwest of the US 311/NC 68 intersection.

Festivities will begin at 11:30 and will feature our special guest speaker: Editor-in-Chief Vicky Jarrett of Our State Magazine.

Legislative Issues

NARFE On August 14th, the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov/cpi or 202/691-6994) reported that the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers, the CPI-W, for July 2008 is 216.304, **up 0.5 percent** from the June index of 215.223. The CPI-W for July is **6.2 percent higher** than the 2007 third quarter average base index of 203.6. For purposes of calculating the next COLA (cost-of-living adjustment) the index has **increased 6.2 percent**. Consumer price indices for the month of August will be released on Tuesday, September 16, the same day as the next scheduled meeting of Federal Reserve's Open Markets Committee. (NOTE August and September data must be averaged with the July number reported above.)

Former federal employees now receiving monthly benefits under provisions of the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA) receive a COLA based on the change in the CPI-W during each calendar year. Thus far, the index is **5.2 percent higher** than the December 2007 base of 205.7.

Mid August saw a changing of the guard in two positions important to NARFE members. On August 1st, President Bush nominated Michael W.

Hager to serve as director of the Office of Personnel Management. Hager, until now a high ranking Department of Veterans Affairs official, replaces Linda Springer. The bigger news is the arrival of Joe Davidson as the Washington Post's Federal Diary columnist, a key journalism perch previously held by Steve Barr (2000-2008) and Mike Causey (1972-2000). (To see more about Hager, go to:

http://www.opm.gov/About_OPM/ExecutiveTeam/index.asp and about Springer, go to: <http://www.opm.gov/news/opm-director-springer-announces-her-departure.1424.aspx> To read the return of the Federal Diary, now by Joe Davidson (federaldiary@washpost.com) go to: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/11/AR2008081102405.html>)

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Make A Difference !

The NARFE legislative department (leg@narfe.org or 703/838-7760) is eager to help you contact your Congressional representatives. CongressMerge.com provides a useful Online Congressional Directory, with full information about each District Office including phone number and street address. Unique to this site are maps and driving directions. (The URL is <http://www.congressmerge.com/onlinedb/index.htm>)

Other resources include:

the NARFE-sponsored toll free number for the Capitol switchboard, 1-866-220-0044 (ask for your Member by name

the NARFE Legislative Action Center, <http://capwiz.com/narfe/dbq/officials/>

the Senate gateway to individual Members' "web forms" (www.senate.gov)

Representative Coble's Washington Office can be reached by calling the NARFE-sponsored toll free number for the Capitol switchboard. His Greensboro office is at 2102 N. Elm Street, Suite B, Greensboro, NC 27408, (336) 333-5005.

Representative Miller's Washington Office can be reached by calling the NARFE-sponsored toll free number for the Capitol switchboard. His Raleigh office is at 1300 St. Mary's St., Suite 504, Raleigh, NC 27605 (919) 836-1313.

Representative Watt's Washington Office can be reached by calling the NARFE-sponsored toll free number for the Capitol switchboard. His Charlotte office is at 1230 Morehead St., Suite 306, Charlotte, NC 28208, (704) 344-9950.

Representative Foxx's Washington Office can be reached by calling the NARFE-sponsored toll free

number for the Capitol switchboard. Her Clemmons Office is at 6000 Meadowbrook Mall, Suite 3, Clemmons, NC 27012, (336) 778-0211 or Toll Free: 1 (866) 677-8968

Senator Burr's Washington office can be reached by calling the NARFE-sponsored toll free number for the Capitol switchboard, 1-866-220-0044. His Winston-Salem office can be reached at (336) 631-5125 or you can write to 2000 W. First Street, Suite 508, Winston-Salem, NC 27104.

Senator Dole's office in Washington can be reached by calling the NARFE sponsored toll free number for the Capitol switchboard, 1-866-220-0044. Her Raleigh Office is 310 New Bern Ave., Suite 122, Raleigh, NC 27601, and the phone number is (919) 856-4630.

For those of you with internet access, use the Legislative Action Center on the NARFE web site to find your congressional delegation and their cosponsor status. Then take action. (The most direct URL is <http://capwiz.com/narfe/home/>)

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The NARFE Hotline

As a service of the NARFE, the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association, a weekly legislative message is available to telephone callers (703/838-7780 and toll free at 1-877-217-8234), and is posted for members on NARFE's Internet site, www.narfe.org.

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NARFE 2008 Candidates' Questionnaire

The NARFE Chapters in Greensboro, High Point, and Winston-Salem represent the retirement interests of nearly 6,000 federal employees and more than 6,400 federal annuitants in the several counties served by these chapters. Five incumbent members of Congress (four members of the U.S. House of Representatives and one U.S. Senator) representing our area are running for re-election. In an effort to better inform NARFE members of each candidate's stand on the issues most important to Federal employees and annuitants, all five incumbents and all five challengers in these races have been contacted to obtain their responses to three questions posed in the 2008 NARFE Candidates' Questionnaire.

The questions posed are as follows:

1) Entitlement Reform Amid partisan and bipartisan proposals to study entitlement reform, NARFE has historically, if reluctantly, supported shared sacrifice and vigorously opposed being singled out for benefit reductions not required of

other retirees. In fact, federal retirees' cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) were reduced by \$50 billion during the 1980s and early 1990s, while not a dime was cut from Social Security COLAs. ***In the context of entitlement reform, what is your position on COLA equity between Social Security, federal civilian and military retirees?***

2) Health Care The Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) is the nation's largest employer-sponsored health plan. Successful since its creation in 1959, the FEHBP covers some eight million workers, retirees and their families. For almost 50 years, this program has been so successful that past and present presidential candidates have proposed using the FEHBP as the model for expanding coverage of the uninsured and under-insured.

What are your idea(s) for addressing our nation's health care needs? Would you favor having persons outside the federal community made eligible to enroll in the FEHBP? If so, should the new blocs of enrollees be placed in a separate risk pool?

3) Future of Social Security and Medicare

Passing into and out of public debate, the two largest entitlement programs, Social Security and Medicare, are vital to all generations of Americans.

How do you believe we can best ensure that Social Security and Medicare continue to provide economic and health security for current and future retirees?

All ten incumbents and challengers were contacted in late July for their responses to these issues. To date, responses have been received from Teresa Sue Bratton, Candidate for Congress, 6th Congressional District; 13th District Congressman Brad Miller, and 12th District Congressman Mel Watt.

Challengers Kay Hagan (Senate), Roy Carter (5th District), Hugh Webster (13th District), and Ty Cobb (12th District) did not respond to the questionnaire. Incumbents Dole (Senate) and Foxx (5th District) also did not respond. Representative Coble ((6th District) indicated that it is his policy not to respond to questionnaires but refers interested parties to his voting record (see summary below).

1) Entitlement Reform.

In the context of entitlement reform, what is your position on COLA equity between Social Security, federal civilian and military retirees?

Teresa Sue Bratton
Candidate for Congress
6th Congressional District

I support COLA equity for Social Security, federal civilian and military retirees.

Honorable Brad Miller
Member of Congress

13th Congressional District

I support COLA equity for all retirement plans- Social Security, federal civilian and military retirees.

Honorable Mel Watt
Member of Congress
12th Congressional District

I have been a strong supporter of COLA equity between Social Security, federal civilian and military retirees. I have always cosponsored all the bills calling for COLA equity and have voted for them when they have been considered. While we have made some progress on this issue, there is still much to be done to reach equity and I will certainly continue to be your ally in these efforts.

2) Health Care.

What are your idea(s) for addressing our nation's health care needs? Would you favor having persons outside the federal community made eligible to enroll in the FEHBP? If so, should the new blocs of enrollees be placed in a separate risk pool?

Teresa Sue Bratton
Candidate for Congress
6th Congressional District

I support health care coverage for all Americans. I would envision a system with public and private components with all Americans having age-appropriate, primary, preventive care, chronic disease management, mental health parity, affordable portability and catastrophic coverage. Specific mechanisms would have to be hammered out. I would start by covering children through Medicaid, SCHIP and other programs such as NC Kids. For Americans who are between childhood and 65 years old we might create a non-profit entity with a low administrative overhead. There would be no pre-existing condition exclusions; cost could be means-adjusted; businesses might be allowed to buy in with the same lack of pre-existing exclusions and means-adjusted costs.

Honorable Brad Miller
Member of Congress
13th Congressional District

Federal Employees pay a portion of their Health Insurance Premium. Every year the Congressional Budget Office suggests that one way to control government spending is to put a limit on how much the federal government's portion of health insurance premiums can increase. Their suggestion is to limit annual growth in the government's share of FEHBP premiums to the consumer price index (CPI). The cost of Health Care is

growing much more rapidly than the CPI. Under this proposal, Federal Employees would end up paying more and more of their health insurance premium – NARFE is very against this.

Premium Conversion: Currently employed Federal employees are allowed to play their health insurance premiums with pre-tax funds. However federal retirees and annuitants must use after-tax dollars to pay their premiums. I am a cosponsor of the NARFE supported HR 1110. This bill would allow federal annuitants, as well as active duty and retired members of the uniformed services, to pay their share of employer-provided health insurance premiums with non-taxable earnings. This bill currently has 304 co-sponsors.

Honorable Mel Watt
Member of Congress
12th Congressional District

I continue to believe that some form of universal medical coverage will be necessary to solve our health care problems and I am looking forward to being a part of a renewed effort next year to achieve universal coverage for all our citizens. Until we have adopted and put in place a universal plan, I do favor the interim step of allowing persons outside the federal community to become eligible to enroll in the FEHBP. This must be done in such a way, however, that it does not result in new members being placed in separate risk pools. If possible, we should avoid creating separate risk pools because that could result in a proliferation of plans and premium structures. However, separate pools may be necessary for the protection of current participants.

3) Future of Social Security and Medicare
How do you believe we can best ensure that Social Security and Medicare continue to provide economic and health security for current and future retirees?

Teresa Sue Bratton
Candidate for Congress
6th Congressional District

I believe that we should remove the income cap on which Social Security and Medicare are assessed. Medicare Part C should be reassessed as it has turned out to be more expensive than traditional Medicare. The payment profile for procedural and cognitive activities should be rebalanced with more remuneration for cognitive function and more cost savings from procedures; evidence-based therapy needs to be emphasized; the more cost-effective therapy of therapeutic equals should be favored; Part D of Medicare needs to be changed to allow cost savings while protecting our most vulnerable.

Honorable Brad Miller
Member of Congress
13th Congressional District

As the U.S. population ages and the cost of medical care increases, Medicare expenditures will continue to rise. There are rumors that the President may propose cuts to the Medicare program in order to contain cost. While I believe that Congress needs to address the rising cost of Medicare, the solution should not take the form of arbitrary cuts to reimbursement rates or services provided. Simply cutting reimbursement rates will force health care facilities to absorb the extra costs, possibly driving them out of business. Cutting services will not save money in the long-run as we will see more people with chronic conditions that could have been caught earlier, more people going to the emergency room, and more people relying on long-term care. A long-term solution needs to be developed through careful thought and collaboration between all parties involved.

The Medicare program is a commitment made by each generation to the one that preceded it. I will do all that I can to keep that promise and keep Medicare a rock solid guarantee for today's retirees and for future generations as well.

Honorable Mel Watt
Member of Congress
12th Congressional District

I am committed to taking whatever steps are necessary to protect Social Security and Medicare for current and future beneficiaries.

Social Security is now secure through 2041 and we should be considering all options now to insure its permanent viability. Modest adjustments that take into account increasing life expectancies must certainly be considered. But so should every other option. It's important that we appoint a Commission soon to take an in-depth look at all options before we get into an emergency time situation.

The first step toward long-term viability for Medicare is universal health coverage that places greater emphasis on preventing medical conditions, rather than treating them in emergency rooms in the least efficient and least cost effective ways. Allowing the government to negotiate prices for prescription medications and closing the "donut hole" in the Medicare prescription drug program must also be high on our priority list next year.

VOTING RECORDS

1981 - 2008

In the absence of responses from Representatives Foxx and Coble, and Senator Dole, an analysis of their voting records may be instructive. Recently-released data from Headquarters NARFE regarding Congressional voting patterns during the 110th Congress provides us an opportunity to compare members of the North Carolina Congressional delegation with respect to their support of the NARFE agenda. NARFE Headquarters has summarized the voting records of all members of Congress on key NARFE votes taken since 1981. The results for the entire North Carolina delegation to Congress are presented below. Detailed information regarding these votes is available in the October 2008 issue of [NARFE Retirement Life](#).

<u>District</u>		<u>With NARFE</u>	<u>Against NARFE</u>	<u>% With NARFE</u>
1	Butterfield	10	0	100.0%
2	Etheridge	21	2	91.3%
3	Jones	13	15	46.4%
4	Price	39	3	92.9%
5	Foxx	2	6	25.0%
6	Coble	19	33	36.5%
7	McIntyre	20	3	87.0%
8	Hayes	8	13	38.1%
9	Myrick	4	24	14.3%
10	McHenry	2	6	25.0%
11	Shuler	4	1	80.0%
12	Watt	30	1	96.8%
13	Miller	6	0	100.0%
	Dole	2	5	28.6%
	Burr	0	4	0.0%

NARFE High Point Chapter 668 Leadership

President	Betty J. Whitten	336-476-3250
Vice-President	James L. Whitten	336-476-3250
Secretary	Barbara W. Snyder	336-883-4878
Treasurer	Herman J. Doetsch	336-381-3545

Chapter 668 Meetings, 11:00 a.m., Fourth Monday of each month
No meetings June, July, August, and November
December meeting is the First Monday of the month
Pioneer Family Steakhouse, 10913 N. Main Street, Archdale

NARFE Greensboro Chapter 211 Leadership

President	Larry Standley	336-855-7095
1 st Vice-President	Herb Lieberman	336-545-7923
2 nd Vice-President	Jerry Pifer	336-273-8861
Secretary	Margaret Harris	336-674-3029
Treasurer	Doris Stafford	336-454-4858

Chapter 211 Meetings, Second Thursday of each month, 11:45 am
Golden Corral Buffet & Grill 2419 Lawndale Drive, Greensboro

NARFE Winston-Salem Chapter 454 Leadership

President	John A. Koivisto	336-721-1783
Vice-President	Peggy B. Walker	336-731-0311
Secretary	Roger N. Quincoses	336-996-8907
Treasurer	James Pittman	336-896-0789
Membership Chair	Jean C. Craddock	336-788-1074
Legislative Chair	Edgar W. Calloway	336-766-8877

Chapter 454 Meetings, First Friday of each month, except January, 11:30 am
Southern Family Restaurant, 4689 Yadkinville Rd, Pfafftown

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308 Woodbine Ct
Greensboro, NC 274303-1549



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