NARFE

NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

Charles R. Patton Chapter 156
136 Castlerock Drive, Asheville, NC 28806-9517

Newsletter
February 2010

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The National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) is the only association dedicated to safeguarding and enhancing the benefits of America's active and retired federal employees, and their survivors.

EVENT: CHARLES R. PATTON CHAPTER 156 FEBRUARY MEETING
WHEN: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2010
WHERE: RYAN'S FAMILY STEAK HOUSE, NEAR BILTMORE SQUARE MALL
TIME: BREAKFAST AT 9:30, MEETING AT 10:15 AM

FEBRUARY PROGRAM

Our February program will be on Taxes – The 2009 Tax Year, what is new or changed for 2009, what is sometimes or often missed, what may be coming up for 2010, and discussion. Our Speaker is Sam Crain, Member of Smokey Mountain NARFE Chapter 1420 (Waynesville), treasurer for NARFE's NC Federation of Chapters and tax return consultant with H&R Block. Plan to join us for an informative and useful program.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

First I wish everyone the best in 2010. This may prove to be a rather bumpy year regarding our benefits in retirement as there are many real and/or potential issues that may hit close to home. I urge all to keep their communication path to our Senators and Representative open and active.

Our Chapter's year started with a productive planning meeting. Twelve members (including Chapter Leaders plus three members) braved the frigid weather. Thank you for participating. We held discussion on budget, chapter meeting logistics, programs, legislation, service, newsletter, public relations, local projects, and area activities. Of immediate interest and action were: Approval of the 2010 budget (to include support for the 2010 convention as in the past and reimbursing the registration fee ($55) for each delegate to the convention). Critical discussion was held on meeting logistics. As you know, last year we tried quarterly meeting, resulting in a marked reduction in attendance. It was generally felt that quarterly meetings reduced continuity in meeting, hampered sharing of timely information and if members had family, travel, or health issues, etc. that conflicted with a quarterly meeting, they missed a large segment of time without a chapter meeting. There were also issues with our meeting location. A committee was appointed to investigate other locations. The Saturday AM meeting timeframe was favored, and our Leadership team will be deciding on our meeting frequency. Many like to eat in conjunction with the meeting. We are attempting to keep that cost down for all. Please let me know your opinions. Our first Chapter meeting this year will be in February. Hope to see you there. We need your support of Chapter meetings!

Theron Rumsey, President

ALZHEIMER DONATIONS

Donations from the NC Federation's chapters for 2009 totaled $31,259.40; the best year ever. Peggy Malley and the NC Federation leadership thank all chapters for their support of Alzheimer's Research.

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NC FEDERATION OF CHAPTERS STATE CONVENTION

Mark your calendar now to attend our 2010 State Convention at the Embassy Suites, Greensboro, NC, on May 5-7. The convention program and facilities are a real bargain at $55 registration (including the reception and banquet) and $89 plus tax room rate which includes a full breakfast. More details to follow regarding registration (due by April 10) and participation as a chapter delegate and/or committee member or contact Jerry Pifer, chair, Convention Planning Committee (Jpifer@earthlink.net, phone at 336-273-8861. Plan to be a part of a great informative and entertaining NARFE meeting, and a thank you to our Chapter member Elaine Hughes for her 2 years as President of the NC Federation.

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MEETING LOGISTICS

A committee has been working hard to find facilities to recommend for Chapter meetings. Guidelines from our planning meeting discussion were: adequate facility with private room, minimize cost, Saturday AM time frame, meal available, close as possible to central Asheville. The committee chose to investigate restaurants and Senior facilities. A committee report will be made at the upcoming February meeting, and a final decision will be made at this meeting. Please make every effort to attend. Your input is important.

Theron Rumsey, President

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FEDERAL TAX WITHHOLDINGS FOR 2010

Chapter member Jim Ariail brought to our attention the reduction in federal taxes being withheld in 2010 as noted in our recent OPM mailing, with the concern that this may cause some to pay rather than get a refund when filing their 2010 taxes. Jim checked with OPM and they will allow adjustment in withholdings. Contact OPM at 1-888-767-6738 (have your CSA # available).

MESSAGE FROM YOUR SERVICE OFFICER

Hi. I am your Chapter's Service Officer. If you have a question, or problem, associated with your retirement benefits other than those associated with social security or military service, I may be able to help you. Normally, I deal with: 1) contacting the national Office of Personnel Management, 2) applying for survivor's benefits, 3) making changes resulting in changes in your marital status, 4) dealing with Federal and/or State tax withholding, 5) your health benefits, 6) federal group life insurance, 7) the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), or 8) Medicare. If I cannot handle your concern, I know where to turn to obtain the needed information.

Regarding a number of current topics or issues, it may be of interest to know that:

- An organization such as NARFE can be successful only with effective communication. In 2010, our Chapter leaders plan to give increased attention to changes in chapter bylaws, material on particular issues or topics, information on serving as delegates to state or national conventions, etc.
- Members will be kept informed on the status of ongoing activities or those that are in the planning phase, at the chapter level or in the North Carolina Federation.
- Important information will be shared with you in the Chapter's newsletter, the Federation Newsletter and the NARFE magazine on a timely basis.
- NARFE budgets considerable money ($615,094 in FY2009) for the recruitment and retention of members. Loss of members can be costly to the national and state NARFE organizations. There are many NARFE incentive plans to sign up new members but no incentive program for retaining members, although there is a Federation Chapter award that highlights retention. After all, NARFE's most important asset is its membership.
- To date, no impending legislation has had an impact on the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP). NARFE members can consult the Legislative Hotline to keep up-to-date on the latest focus of the Association's advocacy efforts.
- NARFE'S Political Action Committee (NARFE-PAC) achieved several legislative victories in 2009 and successfully fended off efforts to reduce our earned benefits.
- There was no cost-of-living (COLA) in the three federally administered retirement programs (Social Security, military retirement and federal civil service) in 2009. This is the first time this has happened since automatic COLAS have been provided where warranted since 1975. Hopefully, positive adjustments will be resumed in 2011, where warranted.

Bob Thatcher,
Service Officer

Editor's Note: One of the popular publications available from our Service Officer is "Be Prepared for Life's Events":

The Be Prepared for Life's Events booklet (F-100) is one of the most ask for publications from NARFE. It is a guide for federal employees and annuitants to assist spouses and families when an unexpected event occurs that requires immediate recall of personal information or where that information may be found.

This booklet allows you to organize this information and it serves as a guide for the steps that need to be taken to properly handle official actions or notifications via OPM. It also can be a quick reference to contacting your NARFE Service Officer who can be of great assistance at these unexpected times. You are urged to acquire one on these booklets by requesting from your Chapter Service Officer Bob Thatcher (828-684-6627).

BENEVOLENCE REPORT THRU DECEMBER 2009

New chapter members: We welcome the following folks:

James Chambers Laura Deal
Jim Mayo

Please join us at our chapter meetings announced in our newsletter.

Members that decided to drop their membership:

Bryan Anders Joseph Hemphill
Joseph Howell Harry Shotwell

We ask any member acquainted with these folks to give them a call and encourage them to reinstate their membership. They are important to us and to NARFE as NARFE is to them.

Members Passed Away:

Norman Bradford Barbara Popadines

We offer prayers for the families of the deceased.. The memories of them will live on within the NARFE community.

COFFEE CLUSTER (NORTH)

The Northside Cluster will met at Wayne's Restaurant (formerly Home Folks Café) on February 18th at 9:00 am. This is a good time to chat with fellow chapter members or to bring a prospective member and introduce them to fellow retirees. Drop in and stay in touch over a cup of coffee or maybe breakfast. We would be delighted to see you.

Theron Rumsey (828-658-2131)

COFFEE CLUSTER (EAST)

The Eastside Cluster will meet Thursday, February 4, 2010 at the J&S Cafeteria, River Ridge Shopping Center, 11:00 am. Call Ted Mathis at 298-4400 for information.

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER RECOGNIZED

At our Christmas Party on December 12, 2009 Lewis Blodgett was officially recognized as a Distinguished member of NARFE. Distinguished members are members who have been a member of NARFE for 20 years and have reached the young age of 85. Congratulations Lewis and thanks for your years of service to NARFE and the Chapter. Let the Chapter President know if you, or any member you know, meet the Distinguished Member criteria.

~ A Hug is a perfect gift. One size fits all and nobody minds if you exchange it.~ Anonymous

Deadline for the next newsletter – February 19, 2010

WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE GROCE FUNERAL HOME AND ASHEVILLE QUICKPRINT FOR THEIR CONTINUING SUPPORT TO NARFE CHAPTER 156.

RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED

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NARFE CHAPTER NEWS

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