



Bety Downey – Benevolence Chair. In 2008 Bety has sent out 53 cards; 12 sympathy, 17 to new members & transfers, 3 get-well, 3 to new prospects and 18 to members renewing membership. Thanks Bety!

\*Bruce Habermann – Chapter Treasurer and NARFE-PAC Chair.

\*Elaine Hughes – Current Federation President and many years of leadership service in Chapter 156.

Lucille Lamy - Newsletter Assistant (folding, addressing, & mailing), and. conducts Alzheimers 50-50 collection at Chapter Meetings.

Dan Louderback – Meeting and Special Events Logistics.

\*Ted Mathis – Chapter Legislative Officer and Federation Area I Legislative Contact Officer.

\*Frank Quinlan – Chapter President

\*Theron Rumsey – Chapter Newsletter Editor, NARFE Net Coordinator, & Federation Membership Coordinator

Dale Rusk – Chapter 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President and Program Chair.

\*Bob Thatcher – Chapter Service Officer.

Bill Ward – Various contributions to the Newsletter.

Also included are Neva Carlson and Martha Hawkins who stepped forward to serve as new officers for 2009 and spouses of the above listed members.

\* Federation Area I Legislative Steering Committee members.

*Frank Quinlan and Theron Rumsey*

### **THE FEHBP ARENA**

Health Benefit Issues – Last March, OPM encouraged FEHBP insurance carriers to create separate health plans for Medicare-eligible federal annuitants called a “sub-option.” While OPM said that enrollees in the Medicare pilot “sub-option” would pay the same premiums set for their counterpart FEHBP plans, NARFE was concerned that a plan specifically created for Medicare-eligible federal annuitants could have opened the door for separately rated retiree plans in the future with substantially higher premiums than other FEHBP plans. NARFE President Baptiste stated in a press release “We are happy that OPM exercised the due diligence necessary to determine that the proposed option was not acceptable. “NARFE stands ready to work with OPM to ensure that FEHBP’s plans continue to provide comprehensive coverage and that premiums and cost-sharing are affordable for not just retirees, but for all enrollees.”

New Hearing Aid Benefit – Check with your specific FEHBP for details. In the case of Blue/Cross and Blue Shield, both Basic and Standard options provide hearing aid benefit up to \$1,000 per ear per 36-month period. Previously, benefits were limited to bone anchored hearing aids. Check your specific plan for other new benefits such as an allowance for wigs for hair loss due to chemotherapy.

Premium and Co-Pay Increases – On the downside, part of our 5.8% COLA has been spent for us. Be aware that premiums and co-pay amounts will increase significantly starting January. President Baptiste noted in a press release

that on average FEHBP premiums will increase 7 % for 2009, with BC/BS increasing the greatest – 13.3%.

FEHBP Open Season closes December 8, 2008.

### **THE LEGISLATIVE ARENA**

A Friend Retained - Senate democrats voted not to strip Connecticut Senator, Joe Lieberman, of his chairmanship of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. This committee has jurisdiction for civil service and Sen. Lieberman has been a great NARFE champion. The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform has jurisdiction for civil service.

A Time To Get Acquainted - In House and Senate elections, most first time winners will have had little exposure to the federal civil service. Grassroots chapter and federation outreach resulting in individual or group meetings should cover income security and health security issues. The period prior to their swearing-in ceremonies in January, is an excellent time to meet the Members-Elect in their hometowns and begin their education. Be sure to provide them with recent issues of our magazine and/or position papers on high priority issues from the Legislative section at the NARFE web site, [www.narfe.org/home](http://www.narfe.org/home).

### **ELECTION BRINGS REAL CHANGE**

Serving as Editor for the Charles R. Patton Chapter 0156 newsletter for the past 2 years has been a real pleasure for me. I hope my efforts were successful in providing some useful information regarding NARFE and our State, Area, and Local activities. However, somewhere we have heard that elections bring change. As I have agreed to serve as your Chapter President next year, Frank Quinlan has agreed to become the Editor of our Chapter newsletter. Way to go Frank. Our newsletter is in good hands. As always, make your ideas and suggestions known and feel free to get us your newsletter contributions. *Theron Rumsey*

### **SENIOR BUMPER STICKERS**



**Deadline for the next newsletter – January 26, 2009**

WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE GROCE FUNERAL HOME AND ASHEVILLE QUICKPRINT FOR THEIR CONTINUING SUPPORT TO NARFE CHAPTER 156, RYAN'S FAMILY STEAK HOUSE, and O'CHARLEY'S FOR PROVIDING MEETING ROOM SPACE.

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

**NARFE  
CHAPTER NEWS**

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Permit No. 243  
Asheville, NC 28801

RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED