



# Roanoke Valley—Chapter 2297

## Chapter News

Volume 4, Number 2

February 2009

**Next Chapter Meeting**  
**Noon, Tuesday, February 24<sup>th</sup>**  
**New China Restaurant**  
**Roanoke Rapids**

**Guest Speaker**  
**Ms. Judy Lassiter**  
**Genealogy**

### Upcoming Events

#### *February Chapter Meeting*

Noon, Tuesday February 24<sup>th</sup>  
New China Restaurant.

#### *Officers Meeting*

TBD

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### Mike' Comments

I am becoming deeply concerned about the attendance at our Monthly meetings. We seem to be losing members that have historically been faithful attendees. I would be interested in hearing from you as to the reasons that you don't attend and particularly if you used to attend and have fallen away. The officers try to have interesting programs each month; however, I realize that we cannot please everyone but if the program is the problem please let me or any other officer know what you would like in the line of speakers.

I am not sure what the stimulus bill is about but it looks like we will be getting some tax relief and those of us on Social Security it appears will get a \$250 bonus. Again, I am not sure about any of this and it still has to be implemented. I suspect implementation will be a lengthy process. Tim has included some news releases from NARFE Headquarters touching on this. On the stimulus bill, NARFE was unable to get the WEP, GPO and insurance items included as riders. This is a bad time to be looking at those types of actions in view of the economy. My feeling is we need to hold onto what we have.

Another area of concern is Chapter officers for next year and the future. If things go as they are right now we will lose three officers in December—me, Tim Stone and Barry Van Scoyoc (President, Secretary and Treasurer, respectively). Now is the time to really think about it and when we return from the summer break step up and take over.

Mike McCoid  
President

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### February's Meeting

We seem to talk about trees during the first part of the year. So it time for our annual tree discussion—but this time not about the kind of tree we send to the pulp mill but the tree we sprung from as people!

Our guest speakers at the meeting will be Mss. Judy Lassiter and Shirley Skinner from the Lake Gaston Computer Club Genealogy Group. They will discuss tools and methods for researching your family tree.

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### NARFE Hotline Messages

The following is extracted from two recent Hotline messages from NARFE Headquarters.

February 2009

Hotline Message: February 17, 2009

On Tuesday, February 17th, at 2:40 pm Mountain Time, President Obama will sign the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Soon, H.R. 1 will be assigned its own Public Law number. NARFE successfully spearheaded efforts to include federal, state and local retirees, who do not receive any Social Security benefits, in the legislation. But for NARFE and coalition work, championed by Sen. John Kerry (D-MA) and with the help of Senate Finance Committee Chairman, Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT), and other fed friendly lawmakers, the massive economic stimulus legislation would have left out many CSRS retirees along with a much larger number of state and local government retirees who are entirely outside the Social Security system.

Under the auspices of the stimulus package, tax relief via reduced payroll tax withholding will be provided to wage-earners under the 'Make Work Pay' provisions. Social Security, Veterans, Supplemental Security Income and Railroad Retirement beneficiaries, who are not otherwise wage-earners, will automatically receive an additional \$250 check from the federal government. As a result of NARFE's advocacy, federal retirees who are not eligible for any of these payments will be eligible to take a newly-created \$250 per person refundable tax credit for the 2009 tax year.

Information on how non-Social Security retirees can apply for the tax credit will be provided to NARFE members when it becomes available via this Hotline and in NARFE magazine.

Hotline Message: February 13, 2009

Premium Conversion legislation, a NARFE priority, is scheduled to be introduced in both chambers during the week of February 23. Premium Conversion, for federal and military retirees, means paying monthly health insurance premiums on a pre-tax basis. NARFE members should urge their congressional delegations, especially past cosponsors to sign on to the new bills by contacting the bills' new sponsors, Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and Sen. Jim Webb (D-VA). 303 of the 344 House cosponsors during 2007-2008 were reelected. In the Senate, 49 of the 61 previous cosponsors still serve in the Senate. The toll free number for the Capitol switchboard is 1-866-220-0044. (An alphabetical list of the 344 cosponsors is available at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:HR01110:@@P> The 61 Senate cosponsors are listed at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:s773:@@P>)

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## **Does It Pay—Does Anyone Listen?**

As NARFE members, it is incumbent upon us to contact our elected Congressional delegation and urge them to support legislation of interest and benefit to us as Federal retirees. Last month, NARFE Headquarters urged us to contact our delegation concerning GPO and WEP. Well, one of our Chapter members did and his message to Congressman Butterfield follows.

*Congressman Butterfield*

*It is time for our representatives to go to bat for its constituents to repeal the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision laws. These laws unjustly denied federal retirees their previously earned social security benefits. In my case, I worked hard to get the benefits the government had promised me in 1944. Most of my friends working for the government retired and received their fair pay under the social security system while I missed the same benefits by about one month. That was most unfair and unjust to promise one thing and just before earning it, it was removed. I urge you to co-sponsor this legislation as you promised when you visited our NARFE meeting a couple of years ago in Roanoke Rapids. Thank you for your concern on our behalf.*

*Alwood Prescott  
NARFE Chapter 2297*

Following is the response Al received from Congressman Butterfield's office.

*Dear Mr. Prescott:*

*Thank you for taking the time to share your views. I assure you that your thoughts or concerns on this issue have been taken into account. There is much more work to be done in this Congress over the coming months. As we discuss, debate, and vote on this and other similar issues, I will keep your correspondence in mind.*

*Thank you, again, for your letter and for the privilege of serving you in Washington.*

*Very truly yours,  
G.K. Butterfield  
Member of Congress*

Do you see any connection between Al's message and the response?

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## **State Convention**

See the following on the upcoming North Carolina Federation Convention.

### **2009 Convention News Release**

The North Carolina Federation of Chapters of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees (NARFE) Association will hold its Fifty Third Annual State Convention April 28 through 30 at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Hickory North Carolina. NARFE is dedicated to protecting the rights of federal employees and retirees by creating awareness of issues at the national and state levels that may have an impact on our well being. We constantly monitor the activities of the U.S. Congress and the North Carolina Legislature on issues relating to government pensions, taxes, health benefits and issues of fairness. At the national administrative level, rules developed by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) are constantly revised, and such revisions do impact our retirees. For example, recently a major health insurance provider changed the coverage for services provided by an out of network provider making the total cost the responsibility of the retiree. OPM, based on objections from NARFE was able to have the provision reversed. Thus, the way the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program is implemented and the services provided by health contract providers do impact your health and cost.

Within the state we support legislation to extend the benefits of the Bailey Settlement to current government employees. That is; exempt retired military and government employees from state income tax on retirement benefits. This legislation has been introduced in the legislature in the past but has not gained widespread support because of questions of its cost. A recent economic impact study demonstrates the beneficial effects produced by having retirees make their homes in North Carolina. We are also supporting a change in the state "Homestead Act" to freeze real estate taxes on the homes of seniors after the age of 70 so they can remain in their homes and not be forced out because they are unable to pay the increasing cost of property taxes.

If issues impacting seniors in North Carolina in general are of interest to you or if you are a current or retired federal employee, you are invited to attend our annual meeting. We will be discussing these and other issues that you will find important to the quality of your retirement. Don't kid yourself into thinking that our governments are looking out for you – they're not but NARFE is. If you are interested and would like more information contact us at our state website [www.ncnarfe.info](http://www.ncnarfe.info) or our national website at [www.narfe.org](http://www.narfe.org).

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## **Congressional Contacts**

Updated Congressional contacts are below. Note that Senator Burr now has an office in Rocky Mount.

**Capitol Toll-free number:** 1-866-220-0044

Dial the number and ask the operator to be connected to the Congressional office you wish to reach.

### ***Congressional Delegation Contacts***

	<u>Washington, DC office</u>	<u>Local office</u>	<u>Web site</u>
<b><i>House of Representatives</i></b>			
G.K. Butterfield	413 Cannon House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 Phone: (202) 225-3101 Fax: (202) 225-3354	311 West 2 <sup>nd</sup> St Weldon, NC 27890 Phone: (252) 538-4123 Fax: 252-823-0236	<a href="http://www.house.gov/butterfield">http://www.house.gov/butterfield</a>
<b><i>US Senate</i></b>			
Richard Burr	217 Russell Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510 Phone: (202) 224-3154 Fax: (202) 228-2981	100 Coast Line Street, Room 210 Rocky Mount, NC 27804 Phone: (252) 977-9522 Fax: (252) 977-7902	<a href="http://burr.senate.gov">http://burr.senate.gov</a>
Kay R. Hagan	B40a Dirksen Senate Office Building Washington Dc 20510 Phone:( 202) 24-6342	3310 New Bern Avenue Suite 122 Raleigh, NC 27601 Ph: (919) .856-4630	<a href="http://hagan.senate.gov">http://hagan.senate.gov</a>

Note: Each web site has a form for e-mailing the respective Senator/Congressman. That form can generally be accessed by clicking "Contacts" on the Home Page.

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## **Minutes of the January 2009 Chapter Meeting**

President Mike McCoid called the business meeting to order at 12:45 PM, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at the New China Restaurant in Roanoke Rapids. He led the Chapter members and guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Approval of Minutes**

There were no corrections to the minutes of the December meeting as distributed in the December newsletter.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Barry Van Scoyoc reported the balance as of December 31, 2008 as \$701.00, minus \$232 paid to National ; minus \$99 for Christmas party expenses; plus \$34 from the 50/50; for a current balance of \$675.

### **Guest Speaker**

President Mike introduced the speaker, Ms. Patsy Zeigler, Federal Employee Health Benefits Program representative from Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Ms. Zeigler provided several handouts and discussed changes in the FEHBP. She reminded the group that because of the extension of the open season, that BC/BS had until January 31, 2009 to make changes. She also said that information on the dental policy can be found at, [www.benefeds.com](http://www.benefeds.com).

### **Old Business**

The Chapter will continue to meet the New China Restaurant. The cost of lunch at the other suggested location was \$1.00 more per person.

### **New Business**

President Mike

- Reminded the members
  - That they need to consider serving as a Chapter officer, as in September 2009 the call will go out again for officers for 2010.

- The North Carolina Federation State Convention will be April 28, 29, 30 (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday) in Hickory. All members are invited to attend.
- Stressed the need for all Chapter members to e-mail, call, or write to Congressional contacts (Senators and Representatives) regarding the Premium Conversion Bill.

Norman Kramer mentioned a website to obtain inexpensive glasses: [www.zennioptical.com](http://www.zennioptical.com). He stressed that you do need the pupil-to-pupil ratio and that not all eye doctors are forthcoming with this information; but that it is your prescription; you are entitled to this information and you should demand it.

Olive Hutton won the 50/50.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted

Tim Stone  
Secretary

(Thanks to the McCoids for the notes.)

## **Does It Pay—To Belong to NARFE?**

Since you have read this far, the answer obviously is “Yes.” NARFE worked to get some benefit for the Federal retirees in the Stimulus Act and to get Blue Cross Blue Shield to change its proposed out of network provisions for 2009. So send your check in when the renewal notice comes.

## **Chapter Directory**

If you got this newsletter through the regular mail even though you have a valid e-mail address, there are a couple of possible explanations— your e-mail address as listed in the membership directory lists is incorrect or your spam blocker is keeping the e-mail with the newsletter from being delivered into your mail box. To fix the problem:

1. Forward your correct e-mail address to me (Tim Stone) at [tfdnstoneagain1@embarqmail.com](mailto:tfdnstoneagain1@embarqmail.com)
2. Set your spam blocker so e-mails from that address get through to your mail box.

## **Chapter 2297 Officers**

The following individuals are serving as the chapter officers for 2009.

<b>Office</b>	<b>Incumbent</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>E-mail</b>
President	Micheal McCoid	(252) 537-2096	<a href="mailto:mmccoid@embarqmail.com">mmccoid@embarqmail.com</a>
Vice President	Virginia Shell	(252) 537-1713	<a href="mailto:virginiashell@gmail.com">virginiashell@gmail.com</a>
Secretary/Newsletter	Tim Stone	(252) 586-4864	<a href="mailto:tfdnstoneagain1@embarqmail.com">tfdnstoneagain1@embarqmail.com</a>
Treasurer	Barry Van Scoyoc	(252) 410-0433	<a href="mailto:big.bear@earthlink.net">big.bear@earthlink.net</a>
Membership Chair	Barbara Dow	(252) 537-8627	<a href="mailto:dowhome@peoplepc.com">dowhome@peoplepc.com</a>
Service Officer	Harold Gardner	(252) 586-7896	<a href="mailto:beth_gardner@embarqmail.com">beth_gardner@embarqmail.com</a>