

November, 2008

MEMO TO: Region IX Federation Officers, Chapter Presidents and Members of Region IX GEMS

FROM: Lanny Ross, Region IX Vice President

SUBJECT: Report on the NARFE National Executive Board (NEB) held November 10 -14, 2008 at the National Office in Alexandria, VA

As I always state with my report, these are **NOT** the official minutes of the meetings, only my notes of what, to the best of my recollection, took place during the meetings of the NEB. The official minutes will be published after approval in a future magazine.

PLEASE SHARE THESE NOTES WITH YOUR CHAPTER OFFICERS/MEMBERS!

This is my attempt to share as much information with you as possible, without going into great details. If you desire any more details on a particular item, or have any comments, ***please contact me.***

The 2009-2010 National Executive Board (NEB) convened on Monday with all 14 members present. New members to the NEB were: Paul Johnson of Indiana, Region IV; Martha Lieker of Colorado, Region VII, Helen L. Zajac, of California, Region VIII, and Paul H. Carew, of North Carolina, Region X. Former Region X Vice President, Joe Beaudoin is now the National Vice President.

Key Motions made during this meeting were:

1. All 14 members of the NEB will take a 10% cut in their budget.
2. The 2009 Budget was approved.
3. RVP Thissen will serve as Chair of the Audit Committee.
4. NVP Beaudoin will purchase new Silver Circle Pins, without a year designation.
5. The New NARFE Slogan is: "***NARFE Works for You***".

The fifty-seven employees at HQ will receive a 3.9% pay increase on January 1, 2009, the same as the federal employees.

NARFE will celebrate 90 years of serving the federal community in 2011. Advertising efforts leading up to the 2010 Convention will publicize that anniversary.

There will be a resolution at the 2010 Convention to allow a convention delegate to carry more than three proxies to encourage more chapter representation at conventions.

Reported at the meeting by Legislative Director Dan Adcock, and subsequently issued after the meeting, was a letter to President-Elect Barack Obama, requesting that he exercise his authority as President to instruct the Office of Personnel Management to apply for the Medicare employer payment which could be used to lower premiums, enhance plan coverage, and help contain the amount the federal government – as an employer – as well as federal workers and annuitants pay for FEHB premiums; (This is approximately \$1 Billion per year, and is an inter-governmental transfer of monies.) The letter was signed by our Coalition Partners, American Federation of Government Employees, American Foreign Service Association, American Postal Workers Union, Federal Manager's Association, International Association of Fire Fighters, National Association of Letter

Carriers, National Association of Government Employees, National Association of Postmasters of the United States, National Federation of Federal Employees, National League of Postmasters, National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, and National Treasury Employees Union.

The National Legislative Conference will be held March 7–10, 2009 at the Crystal City Hyatt. The NEB meeting will be held just prior to the conference. March 10 will be the day on Capitol Hill to visit Congressional Offices. We need to be watchful of the 111th Congress, as they may be looking for monies from our earned benefits. If you can, please plan to attend. Details have been sent to every Chapter President and Registration Forms appear on page 17 of the December magazine. The long awaited Legislative Handbook should be available after the first of the year.

Federation Presidents will meet, as will the NEB, on July 21-22, 2009 at the site of the 2010 Convention, the Amway Grand in Grand Rapids, MI.

The first day of this NEB meeting was mostly an Orientation Session and Refresher for the NEB, where we heard from each of the Department Heads and received reference materials covering each presentation, followed by a tour of the building, including our Print Shop, where many of our recruiting materials are printed, resulting in a cost savings to the association.

For FEHBP Negotiations – ONLY the Health Plan and the OPM Contracting Officer are allowed to discuss the rates. No unions, employees associations, or any others are allowed into these discussions. Some comments have been received about NARFE getting involved, but it is prohibited.

There is a new Revised “Question and Answer Book” compiled on the Q&A from the magazine is now available for purchase from HQ for \$9.00.

The Service Officer Blog is still in process.

The Magazine will be undergoing some changes to reduce costs to offset the cost of paper and postage. Beginning January 2009, all issues will be 52 pages or less. “Faces of NARFE”, “At Last” (The Way We Worked/Pursuits), “Personal Milestones” (Anniversaries), and “Coupon for Lifetime Membership” will be eliminated. New features will be added: “Federal Career Coach” column, and “TSP Analysis” on For the Record Page. The following will be limited: “Contact Info” to ½ page, “RVP columns” to ½ page, “National Officers (except President) columns” on a rotating basis, “Silver Circle” contributors to quarterly.

5,602 households with two members, choose not to receive two magazines. Although it may seem unnecessary to receive two magazines, it shows a smaller distribution of the magazine; therefore the revenue received from the magazine advertisers is less. It also makes the efforts more difficult to attract Affinity Partners, (the companies listed in the NARFE Perks section of the magazine, who provide a source of non-dues revenues to our association). It has been suggested that each household with two members receive two copies of the magazine – so that one copy may be delivered to the offices of a doctor, dentist, beauty shop, barber shop, senior center, local legislative offices - both national and state, library, or give it to a friend or neighbor – it is one way to provide public relations, and perhaps attract a new member. Remember to cross off your name on the cover and put your membership number on the membership application inside the magazine.

GEMS Membership has dropped to 43,605 from 48,000, as members complain about duplicate messages. GEMS is to be used for time sensitive messages or messages of interest to all members that are not found in other locations. About 20% of the GEMS messages are rejected, due to incorrect e-mail addresses. One GEMS messages takes about 2-1/2 hours and are sent 10 at a time to avoid being

considered SPAM. Please update your e-mail address, or provide your e-mail address to obtain important NARFE information.

In January there will be an opportunity for Chapters too “opt out” of hard copy reports of the Membership Roster (M114), and the Monthly Membership Roster Update (M112); so that chapters who prefer to download the reports from the web site will not have to shred the hard copies.

The reason that the M114 and M112, as well as other reports forwarded to chapters do not match, is that they are basically a “snap shot” of data at one particular time; the monies must be reconciled before the reports close, and each report is printed at different times.

Public Relations will also take a cut in their 2009 budget which may impact the availability of Matching Funds for chapters. Some Federations have established their own Matching Funds program for their Chapters, which help chapters with recruiting efforts.

Membership: The Chapter Membership Plan was approved. The National League of Postmasters allowed us a joint mailing to 31,000 of their members in mid October. No results as yet. The NARFE Membership as of 31 October is 317,965. The largest Chapter in NARFE is the San Diego Chapter #4, with 1,902 members, 2nd largest is Springfield, VA Chapter #893 with 1,769 members and 3rd largest is Huntsville-Madison, AL Chapter #443 with 1,754 members.

For membership recruitment, National recruits about 75% of all members, while chapters recruit about 25% - although recently the numbers have changed to 80% National; 20% chapters.

The average age of our National Only Members is 85. In all of NARFE, the average age is 73.

Weak Chapters were discussed in detail; generally those chapters where one or more members is holding one or more offices. Of particular concern are those Chapter Presidents who also hold the office of Chapter Treasurer. In addition, concern was voiced about spouses who hold the offices of Chapter President and Treasurer. It is not good business practice and there is a potential for concern to the membership. Federation Presidents are asked to help the chapters get new officers to alleviate one person, or spouses serving as Chapter President and Chapter Treasurer.

If you have chapter members not living in your geographic area, you are not authorized to move them without their consent. However, you may contact them and let them know that there is a chapter near their current address, which they may wish to transfer to become an active chapter member and/or potential leader in their nearby chapter.

The revised National Bylaws when printing is complete, can be ordered on the Supply Requisition Form F-18. They will also be posted on the web site for downloading.

The NEB Scholarship Committee: Chair Beaudoin, RVP Johnson, RVP Hatfield and RVP Zajac met to determine the subject for the 2009 essay. The application form will be on the website and in the February, March and April issues of the magazine. The winners of the 2008 Scholarships are pictured in the December issue, pages 70-71.

Silver Circle: \$65,056.00 has been collected since it's inception in 2007, with 21 members donating \$1,000 or more. The cost of manufacturing the pins was \$7,000.

Officer pins may be obtained from HQ using the form on the website. Chapter pins have a blue background to match the blue badges for chapters. Federation pins have a red background to match the red badges for Federation. For information the National pins and badges are gold.

Initial inquiries about dues withholding for Active Federal Employees have not been successful due to the number of different agencies, and conflict with other payroll deductions. However, many agencies allow allotments – please check with your agency to determine if an allotment can be established for NARFE dues withholding.

For Retirees, remember, you save \$4.40 by going on dues withholding and you never have to write another check. For life members, you might consider setting up an annual payment of your chapter dues with your bank, to support your chapter and retain your ability to vote.

There will be occasional limited mailings (postal and e-mail) to members from NARFE’s Affinity Partners. This is a source of non dues revenue for NARFE. ***NARFE does NOT sell your mailing or e-mail addresses.*** One vendor obtained the information from the Chapter Locator on the NARFE Web Site, and probably from some Federation websites. As a result, our webmaster moved the Chapter Locator listing over to the “Member Side”. Now only a member can locate a nearest chapter, defeating the ability of any potential member to contact local NARFE chapters.

As of October 31, NARFE members have contributed a total of \$7,673,801.48 to Alzheimer’s Research.

The last two days were spent in a strategic planning process which evolved into “Combined Ideas for Goals and Tasks” which follows:

➤ ***Address apathy, unity, and involvement within NARFE:***

Tasks

- Animation on website – What NARFE Is Doing for You!
- Scroll message on website: “Tell us your Views”
- Personally contact members as appropriate
- Write magazine articles on this subject

Responsible parties: The NEB, HQ staff, federation and chapter officers

➤ ***Communicate the value of NARFE to current and potential members:***

Tasks

- Revise F-122 with latest information
- Encourage chapters to support NARFE’s programs (e.g., Legislative and Service Officers report at all meetings and in newsletters)
- Implement various ways to improve communication with LSAs and members who do not attend chapter meetings
- Make recruiting materials more positive; list benefits
- Increase member awareness of the NARFE Affinity programs

Responsible parties: The NEB, HQ staff, chapter and federation leaders

➤ ***Recruit, involve, and develop future NARFE leaders:***

Tasks

- Encourage involvement in chapter activities
- Provide mentoring
- Assist chapter leaders to attend regional conferences
- Supply NARFE literature

- Recognize chapter accomplishments

Responsible parties: Chapter and federation leaders

➤ *Establish contacts at local federal agencies/facilities:*

Tasks

- Establish relationships with human resources personnel; e.g.; invite to chapter/federation meetings
- Utilize Service Officers
- Advertise NARFE in local federal agency/facility newsletters

Responsible parties: Chapter and federation leaders

➤ *Improve communications:*

Tasks

- Promote two-way communications at all levels (members, chapters, federations, and headquarters)
- Utilize a positive and friendly approach
- Provide executive summary of any and all surveys, etc.
- Provide updated NARFE materials to assist and educate members and potential members with positive and detailed information

Responsible parties: The NEB, HQ staff, federation and chapter leaders

➤ *Look at other similar membership advocacy organizations and learn from their successes.*

Tasks

- Have the Office of the National Secretary take the lead

Responsible parties: The Office of the National Secretary

➤ *Ongoing communication between chapters, federations, and Headquarters*

Tasks

- Update and reinstate best chapter practices on the web
- Provide a packet for new federation and chapter presidents

Responsible parties: HQ staff (to include Director of Operations, Office of the National Secretary, and IT Department)

NOTE: All above items will be reviewed at the November 2009 NEB meeting.

Respectfully Submitted

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