



NARFE Williamsburg Colonial Chapter 685

## Colonial Crier

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### **HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL**

Hello to all Chapter 685 members! It's the New (and Colder) Year 2010! As the picture in the January 16 issue of *The Virginia Gazette* showed, on January 12 *Gazette* Publisher Bill O'Donovan kicked off our year with a super interesting presentation of James City History "James City After 1607, Roads, Rails, Race and Robbery". His talk took us from the days of Governor William Berkeley and his Greensprings Plantation of the late 1600s right up to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We also had the pleasure of saying hello to three new members, Patricia Albert, Harriet Shuck, and Carol Wynder at the January meeting. Don't forget to introduce yourselves to them if you see them at a future meeting.

### **SAVE THE DATES!**

Program Chair Liz Snyder has been lining up some very interesting programs for our upcoming meetings. On Tuesday, February 9, we will welcome fellow Federal retiree Dick Keiser to Chapter 685. Dick had a long career with the Secret Service, including a stint with the Presidential Protective Service. He'll have lots of Secret Service information and "war stories" to share with us. Don't Miss! On April 13, Bill O'Donovan will return with an interesting presentation entitled "The Art of War". On May 11, retired Marine Corps Gen Anthony Zinni will speak to us about world affairs from his perspective as a former CENTCOM Commander. We'll have more future program information in upcoming issues of *The Crier*.

### **CHAPTER OFFICERS - MEETING LOCATION UPDATE**

As previously announced, over the summer our chapter officers investigated a number of alternatives to our current meeting place at the Crowne Plaza Fort Magruder. A number of amenities were considered; location, parking, menu, type of service, meeting room size and location, technical support (audio\video), food quality\quantity, price, and service. The survey included site visits, surveys, and a meal\service sampling. There was a wide variety of offerings and quality, but a final vote indicated no great favoritism among them for a move

Therefore, there are no immediate plans to re-locate to another venue. Additional negotiations with the current provider are ongoing and could result in a slight increase in meal price, which would also include table service for all courses, including salad and dessert (no buffet), a higher quality entrée and vegetable offering with better portions, and table service for beverages. Until a decision is made, however, the charge for lunch will remain \$13.

### **DANGEROUS & INTERESTING TIMES – EDITORIAL**

Unless you've been locked in a dark closet or sitting on a lonely, windswept mountaintop, you can't have missed the recent spate of news articles and opinion pieces in print and online media indicating

that public attention is turning away from Wall Street “Fat Cat” bankers in search of other greed-soaked (in their ‘humble’ opinions) targets of opportunity. Guess what, friends and neighbors, the new culprits *du jour* are you, me, and other active and retired Federal employees.

On December 12, an eye-catching *USA Today* headline read: “For Feds, More Get Six-Figure Salaries”. The story also reported that the average Federal salary had risen to \$71,260; almost \$31,000 above what they called the average private sector wage.

On December 14, Washington DC’s WTOP-FM (Federal News Radio) web site proclaimed in large type: “Feds Owe Uncle Sam \$3 Billion in Unpaid Taxes”. Scott Rasmussen, one of our most reliable pollsters, reported on December 15 that a recent survey showed that 59% of respondents say that the average government worker earns more than the average taxpayer; 15% said that wasn’t true and 26% weren’t sure. Rasmussen also reported that 51% of all surveyed said government workers were paid too much. This, my friends, means that we active and retired Feds, whom average Americans identify with government, are coming squarely into the crosshairs of media attention. Under different circumstances it might be safe to say “This, too, shall pass”. We don’t, however, live in normal times.

I don’t believe it has been unnoticed that there is a building, bipartisan anger in the American electorate at our political class and the way our government is being run; especially in the current recession. Just the other day a TV pundit quoted unemployment statistics that showed while non-government unemployment was at some 15%, government unemployment was approximately 3%.

The proximity of active and retired Federal employees to the wheels of government put us - you and me - squarely in the crosshairs of this anger. Our best defense is vigilance, and NARFE has several resources which make our task easier. If you have email, sign up for the GEMS messages on the NARFE web site [www.narfe.org](http://www.narfe.org). If not, use the toll free NARFE Legislative Hotline number 1-877-217-8234 to hear the latest Hotline message (updated each Friday when Congress is in session). Watch out, folks. The benefits we lose might never be restored.

### Chapter 685 Contact Information

We’ve noticed that quite a few NARFE Chapters who send us copies of their newsletters are running contact information for their officers and program chairs. That makes it easier for chapter members to get in touch to get information, ask questions, and such. We will publish this information several times a year for the benefit of Chapter 685 members.

Office	Name	Phone	e-mail
President	Barbara Hood	(757) 345-3544	bawhood@cox.net
1 <sup>st</sup> V-P (State Legis.)	Mary Swain	(757) 229-7302	Mswain1899@aol.com
2 <sup>nd</sup> V-P (Nat. Legis.)	Frank Crowe	(757) 645-4538	crowe19@cox.net
Service Officer	James Baker	(757) 220-2662	ELAMBJOY2JB@aol.com
Secretary	Joan Drum	(757) 253-0831	WMD09@cox.net
Treasurer	Arlene Roposh	(757) 259-0063	aroposh@aol.com
M’ ship\Hospitality	Forrest-Ruth Fenstermaker		ffesty@widomaker.com
Programs	Liz Snyder	(757) 220-5415	elizabeth3rd@verizon.net
Newsletter Ed.	Frank Stevenson	(757) 253-2426	f Stevenson1@cox.net
Publicity	Royce Bankhead		royce5@cox.net

## **NEW CHAPTER BYLAWS TO COME UP FOR VOTE**

A group of officers headed by former Chapter 685 President Liz Snyder has been working on updating our chapter constitution and bylaws, which have not been changed since the 1990s. The new ones are below. Please take time to read them, and then jot down any questions or suggestions for changes you might have so they can be discussed at a chapter meeting. NARFE requires a 60 day period for consideration by the members before they can be voted on. Once approved by the chapter, they must then get final approval from NARFE national. Since these are going out to members on/about February 1, they will be officially voted on by members attending the April 13<sup>th</sup> chapter meeting. Proposed bylaws are on page 3 below.

### **Williamsburg Colonial Chapter 685 National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association Virginia Federation of Chapters**

#### **Chapter Bylaws**

#### **Article I. Name**

This chapter shall be known as the Colonial Chapter, number 685 of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association, serving the City of Williamsburg, James City County and Upper York County all in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

#### **Article II. OBJECTIVES**

**Section 1.** The objectives of this chapter shall be to support and work toward the objectives of the National Active and Retired Employees Association, as set forth in paragraph 3 of the Association's Articles of Incorporation. In furtherance of these objectives, this chapter shall conform with Association Bylaws. It shall operate in unity with policies established by the Association's national conventions and national executive board, together with such other activities looking toward the preservation of American institutions and ideals as shall be espoused by the Association.

**Section 2.** The chapter shall not enter into activities, arrangements or agreements which conflict with programs or activities of the Association.

#### **Article III. MEMBERSHIP**

Any person who is or shall be eligible to receive an annuity or survivor annuity from any of the civilian retirement programs of any agency of the government of the United States of America or the District of Columbia shall be eligible for membership in the Association and this chapter, without regard to race, color, sex or age.

#### **Article IV. DUES**

The chapter shall fix such dues as are necessary to meet expenses of carrying out its business and functions. Any chapter document relating to dues or contributions must contain this statement: "Dues payments and gifts or contributions to NARFE are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes."

#### **Article V. OFFICERS, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, AND COMMITTEES**

**Section 1.** Chapter officers shall be a president, a first and second vice president, a secretary and treasurer who shall be elected at the Annual Meeting to serve for a term of one year or until their successors are elected. Officers assume duties on adjournment of the Meeting at which they are elected. Officers shall be chapter voting members.

**Section 2.** The executive committee shall consist of the elected chapter officers and committee chairs as deemed appropriate. The executive committee shall fill a vacancy in any office and shall exercise such other functions as the chapter may prescribe.

**Section 3.** The membership committee shall be appointed by the president. It shall be the duty of the members of this committee to develop a Membership Plan that describes organized efforts to gain and keep members, encourage Dues Withholding, and contact lapsed members.

**Section 4.** The legislative committee shall consist of the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President and such others as the President shall appoint a) keep abreast of state and national legislative matters concerning federal civil annuitants and prospective annuitants; and b) make recommendations for action to the chapter, the federation and the Association.

**Section 5.** The president may appoint a service officer, a public relations officer, a sunshine committee and such other committees as deemed desirable.

**Section 6.** The chapter may by resolution require the treasurer to give bond for the faithful performance of his or her duties. The expense of obtaining a bond shall be paid from chapter funds.

**Section 7.** The audit committee shall be appointed by the president to annually perform an audit of the financial records of the chapter.

#### **Article VI. CHAPTER MEETINGS**

**Section 1.** Regular meetings of chapter number 685 National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association, shall be held on the second Tuesday of each month from September through May at a previously agreed upon *and announced* site unless a meeting is cancelled by previous chapter vote or by action of the chapter executive committee, with due and reasonable notice to members. The regular meeting in November shall be the annual meeting.

**Section 2.** Special meetings shall be called by the chapter president when necessary, or upon written request of 20 of the chapter's voting members. Written or in person notice of all special meetings shall be given to each chapter voting member at least seven days before each meeting.

**Section 3.** A quorum for conducting chapter business shall consist of 15 of the chapter's voting members, but less than a quorum may adjourn to meet on a future date, of which due notice shall be given.

#### **Article VII. NATIONAL CONVENTION DELEGATES**

Delegates to the Association's national convention shall be elected by the chapter's voting members, in accordance with the National Bylaws and federation guidelines, as soon as possible after the official count of membership and delegate strength is issued by National Headquarters.

#### **Article VIII. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

The rules contained in the current edition Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall govern chapter business in all matters not in conflict with the chapter bylaws or the Association's Articles of Incorporation and National Bylaws.

#### **Article IX. AMENDMENTS**

An amendment to these bylaws shall be made by concurrence of two-thirds of the voting members present and voting at any regular business meeting, provided written notice of the proposed amendment has been transmitted to all chapter voting members not less than 60 days before the meeting at which the vote is taken. Amendments shall then be approved at National Headquarters before becoming effective.

**CHAPTER STANDING RULES** (Standing rules may be suspended by a majority vote for the duration of a meeting.)

The order of business at all regular chapter meetings shall be:

1. Call to order
2. Invocation (or moment of silence)
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Introduction of new members
5. Program
6. Reading of the minutes
7. Officer reports
8. Committee reports
9. Unfinished business
10. New business
11. Announcements
12. Adjournment

**WHY YOUR CHAPTER SERVICE OFFICER IS IMPORTANT**

While all NARFE chapter officers perform duties that are vital to chapter health and smooth operation, perhaps the most important officer to each individual member is the Service Officer. The first and most direct member benefit of belonging to a NARFE chapter is the advice and assistance provided by the Service Officer. When a member has questions about his\her annuity, health benefits, life insurance, Medicare, Social Security, survivor benefits, the service officer is there to help. Even though OPM does a good job of responding to retirees' inquiries, it is sometimes easier to get answers face to face than it is through a long distance phone call. Many questions can be posed and answered by a service officer in person by the service officer, or discreet inquiries can be made on behalf of the retiree by someone they know and trust. Chapter 685 members and their survivors should keep this in mind when they have questions. Jim Brown has much experience and wisdom in this area.

**NATIONAL LEGISLATION CONTACTS**

House of Representatives

Rob Wittman (VA-1)  
1318 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20515

Phone: (202) 224-2023  
FAX: (202) 224-6295

U.S. Senate

Jim Webb  
144 Russell Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510

Phone: (202) 224-4024  
FAX: (202) 228-6363  
Web: <http://webb.senate.gov/contact/>

Mark Warner  
B-40C Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510

Phone: (202) 224-2023  
FAX: (202) 224-6295  
Web: <http://warner.senate.gov/contact/contact.cfm>

## **TAX TIME'S A-COMING, BE PREPARED!**

2<sup>nd</sup> VP Frank Crowe asked that we remind those members who retired under CSRS and are not eligible to receive Social Security that they can apply for the 2009 economic recovery payment when they file their 2009 income tax return. CSRS retirees who aren't eligible for Social Security can claim it as a credit on their 2009 return. IRS publication 721 provides specific instructions on how to claim the credit. The credit is \$250 (\$500 if married and filing jointly). You cannot, however, claim the credit if you already received the \$250 payment through Social Security. The IRS website does tell you how to receive the credit using IRS Schedule M. For further information, consult your tax preparer or the IRS.

If you need help in preparing your 2009 income tax return, the VITA (Voluntary Income Tax Assistance) program will be operational beginning in February. They will be at the James City-Williamsburg Community Center (Wednesdays, 2-6 PM), CW-Bruton Heights Ed Center (Tues. & Thurs, 2-6PM), James River Community Center (Mondays, 2-6 PM), and City of Williamsburg Community Center (Saturdays, (AM – 12:30 PM). No reservations are required. Take all forms and W-2s with you.

## **NARFE Colonial Chapter 685**

**P.O. Box 893**

**Williamsburg, VA 23090-9700**

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