MEETING:

WHERE:
American Legion Post 177
3939 Oak Street, Fairfax

TIME:
Social Hour – 11:30 AM
Lunch – 12:00PM
Cost – $12.00
Speaker / Program – 12:45 PM

MEETING SCHEDULE:
April 9, 2019
May 14, 2019
June 11, 2019
September 10, 2019

PRESIDENT’S CORNER

Many thanks to all the contributors to our food drive which was distributed to “Food for Others.” In March we contributed 101 pounds of non-perishable food to Food for Others. We had more cereal and macaroni & cheese boxes that are lighter. Thank you, thank you!! Keep it up.

The new congressional budget submitted is not favorable to government employees or retirees.

The main program was Robert (Bob) McNeely (LEFT) who spoke to our members about his six years in the Clinton Administration White House. His photographs were interesting and fascinating glimpses into some candid, unplanned moments. Additionally, Kati Ray (ABOVE) gave a short presentation on Clear Caption, a company which will install telephones which will display the contents of a conversation for those people who have a bona fide loss of hearing at no cost.

Come out and hear how to be aware of and prevent becoming a victim of a scam at the April meeting.

IMPORTANT: For the April Meeting Only – Call Mike Fleming at 703-631-5869 to make lunch/meeting reservations. Phone callers and email reservation will still work.

Happy Easter and Happy Passover!

Ted Pasek – Chapter President
CHAPTER 737 FOOD DRIVE

BRING NON-PERISHABLE FOOD TO THE MEETING – We are collecting non-perishable food to distribute through “Food For Others” to help our Northern Virginia neighbors. Please bring some items to our April meeting and future meetings. We are trying to have volunteers accept your donation in the parking lot so you do not need to bring it into the Legion and then take it back to a vehicle. Thank you for all your donations!

Ted Pasek – Chapter President

PROGRAM SCHEDULE FOR 2019

The following programs are planned for our upcoming meetings through June 2019. If you have program requests for consideration, or if you have any comments on the programs, please feel free to contact our new Program Chair Ted Pasek at a Chapter meeting, or at 703-322-9322 or by e-mail at tedpasek@verizon.net.

- April 2019  Officer Sabrina Ruck, Fairfax County Police: Keeping Aware & Safe from Scams
- May 2019  Delegate David Bulova provides updates on the 2019 Virginia Legislative Session
- June 2019  Hawaiian Stars Hula Group, led by our own Melanie Willis

Ted Pasek - Program Coordinator

SERVICE OFFICER

5 SPRING CLEANING SAFETY TIPS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS – Does your kitchen look like a display ad for gadgets and counter-top appliances? Does all the excess furniture lying around your living space look like it should be in a yard sale? If you answered “yes” or even a reluctant “no”, then it’s time to freshen up your home. Spring is the season of renewal, so get caught up in the fever and throw out the junk and re-organize your space!

1. CHECK THE MEDICINE CABINET – Are medications labeled and stored in their proper containers? Do you have old prescription drugs mixed in with the new? These common practices in homes pose potentially dangerous health hazards. Whereas some medications still retain their potency after expiration dates, many do not and should be disposed of. Old liquid antibiotics, drugs comprised of organic ingredients and those requiring refrigeration should be safely discarded.

2. CLEAN UP CLUTTER – Trips and falls are likely to happen when you accumulate too much “stuff”. Reduce the risk by removing unnecessary and obstructive items (including furniture) from your regular walking path and place them in storage. Make maintaining a clear walkway in every room of the house or apartment a top priority. And either tape carpet edges or throw rugs to the floor or get rid of them entirely.

3. HAVE AN EMERGENCY PLAN IN PLACE – In case of an emergency such as a fall, an attempted burglary, or a kitchen accident, do you have important numbers on speed dial? Know who to call in an emergency and have your phone programmed, accordingly. If you reside in an assisted living community, be sure you understand how the emergency response system works. Just like when you were living in a neighborhood, look out for others and know who to go to for help.

4. NEVER TRY TO MOVE HEAVY OBJECTS OR FURNITURE ON YOUR OWN – For seniors with reduced strength or mobility challenges, doing household chores may seem like a monumental task. Never try to move furniture or heavy objects on your own. Don’t stand on a chair or ladder to clean hard to reach spots or change light bulbs. Use cordless cleaning tools and lightweight equipment which are easier to use. Try the newer, more efficient technology tools on the market designed to make modern household cleaning a breeze.

5. MONITOR YOUR SMOKE ALARM SYSTEM, FIRE EXTINGUISHER AND EMERGENCY KIT – Periodically check your smoke alarm system and carbon monoxide detectors; run a test to ensure batteries for detectors are functional. Every home should have at least two handheld fire extinguishers (one in the kitchen for sure). Check the expiration date and remind yourself to monitor the device occasionally.

John & Constance Bails, Chapter Co-Service Officers

LEGISLATIVE NEWS
(As of March 23, 2019)
NATIONAL LEGISLATION – In its fiscal 2020 budget released on March 11, the Trump administration has proposed a laundry list of cuts to federal employees' pay and retirement benefits similar to previous years. NARFE objects to the following fiscal year 2020 budget proposals, which amount to more than $177.1 billion in cuts to earned federal benefits:

- Eliminating cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for current and future Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) retirees. Over a 30-year retirement, a typical FERS retiree could lose nearly $250,000 under this proposal.
- Reducing COLAs for Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) retirees by 0.5 percent each year from what the COLA would have been otherwise. When combined with the elimination of the FERS COLA, this would cost federal retirees $56 billion over 10 years, and much more thereafter.
- Federal employees covered under FERS would see employee contributions to their annuities increased by 1 percent each year for the next six years, without any corresponding benefit increase. This will cost FERS employees $78.8 billion over the next 10 years, and more thereafter.
- The earned and fully funded FERS Annuity Supplement would be eliminated for new retirees. This benefit, provided to FERS employees who retire before they are eligible to collect Social Security, would hit those with a mandatory retirement age – such as federal law enforcement officers and air traffic controllers – the hardest, costing federal retirees $18.6 billion over the next 10 years.
- Reducing the rate of return on the Thrift Savings Plan's Government Securities Investment (G) Fund. This would cost federal employees and retirees, as well as military personnel and veterans, $16.5 billion over the next 10 years.
- Federal pensions for new retirees would be based on the average of the highest five years of salary instead of the highest three. This would cost federal retirees $7 billion over the next 10 years.
- Reducing working and retirement-age benefits for federal workers disabled through their service, costing them $220 million over 10 years. (News from NARFE)

The administration is also again proposing to combine annual leave and sick leave into “paid time off” for “flexibility,” resulting in reduced total leave days. (FEDweek) A statement from NARFE President Ken Thomas argues: “President Trump’s budget breaks promises to both current and future retirees, reneges on commitments made to our nation's public servants, and sends a very powerful message about the value this administration places on civil service. Particularly revealing in the budget is that these cuts appear under the authority of the General Services Administration, instead of the Office of Personnel Management, which currently administers these programs. It is clear the Administration intends to proceed with eliminating OPM and roll these programs into GSA without proper congressional oversight or approval. NARFE strongly objects to the Executive Branch unilaterally reorganizing federal agencies without input from stakeholders and Congress.” (News from NARFE)

VIRGINIA LEGISLATION – Two issues advocated by the Virginia Federation of NARFE in its 2019 State Legislative Plan, Nonpartisan Redistricting Reform and Voting Reform (allowing “no-excuse” absentee voting) had successful outcomes in the 2019 General Assembly session.

The House and Senate overwhelmingly approved a resolution, HJ 615 and SJ 306, to amend the Virginia Constitution to create an independent redistricting commission to draw new congressional and general assembly district lines after the 2020 census is completed. The resolution will have to pass in identical form next year and receive a majority of votes cast in a referendum in November of 2020 for the change to take effect.

SB 1026, passed by both chambers, allows any registered voter to vote absentee in person beginning on the second Saturday prior to Election Day without having to provide a reason.

Tom Hart - Legislation Program

TREASURER’S REPORT

As of March 1, 2019, the Chapter account balance was $8,591.49. Since that time, we have accrued $746.43 in income, and disbursed $752.75 in expenses. We have a balance of $8,585.17 as of March 31, 2019. At the February meeting a total of $54.00 was donated, in the pink bowls, to Alzheimer's Research and forwarded to the Virginia Federation Alzheimer's Coordinator.

Donna Shackelford – Treasurer
LUCKY NUMBER WINNERS
Hazel Roberts won a free lunch at the March, 2019 meeting. The 40-40-20 raffles were claimed by Sharon Lenius who won 40% drawing ($26.00) and Sam Fisher won the 20% ($14.00) drawing. Congratulations to these winners!!!

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION
Articles for the May, 2019 newsletter are due to the editor by e-mail at WShack1951@aol.com by April 23, 2019. This issue of the Fairfax Chapter 737 newsletter is being sent to 400 members with 295 being sent by USPS & 105 sent via e-mail.

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER
If you would like to get your newsletter several days earlier & save money for Chapter 737, please consider receiving your newsletter electronically. Contact your Newsletter Editor at WShack1951@aol.com to make the change. One advantage of receiving the E-Newsletter is that it saves the chapter some money & you enjoy the pictures of chapter activities in color. The newsletter is also on the Virginia Federation website at www.vanarfe.org.

William Shackelford - Newsletter Editor

MESSAGE FROM PAST PRESIDENT RALPH THOMPSON
ATTENTION MEETING ATTENDEES – I will be in Cancun, Mexico, from March 30 to April 13. Thus, I will miss the April 9th meeting. This means that all those attending the April 9th meeting should give their luncheon reservations FOR THIS MONTH ONLY to our 1st Vice President, Mike Fleming, at 703-631-5869. These reservations should be made no later than Friday April 5, 2019 before the meeting. An accurate count is vital to adequately fulfill luncheon service requirements. Thank you for your cooperation. I hope that you have a good meeting and I will have a margarita or two in your honor!!