



National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

Virginia Federation of Chapters

VFC NOTES – Summer 2008

Serving Current, Former & Retired Federal Civilian Employees, Spouses and Survivor Annuitants

President

R. David Smith
13921 Krim Point Trail
Midlothian, VA. 23114-5531
804-379-6712
Davesmith54@msn.com

1st Vice President

William F. Martin
294 Tyler Point Lane
Bumpass, VA 23024-4633
540-872-3345
NARFE2065@hughes.net

2nd Vice President

Carolyn E. Wilson
6123-C Duncan Road
Petersburg, VA 23803-7478
804-915-6650
NARFE1472@comcast.net

Secretary

Robert H. Miller
801 Chalfonte Drive
Alexandria, VA. 22305-1204
703-683-3025
Vivmiller801@netzero.net

Treasurer

Darlene Myer-Rhodes
P. O. Box 2833
Springfield, VA 22152-2833
703-451-7357
myersprin@aol.com

FEDERATION PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Membership – Congratulations to the five top recruiters for the first seven months of 2008: Marie Collins 28; Barbara Nugent 19; Bill Martin 4, Carolyn Wilson 4 and Jim Landrum 4. There were many others recruiting 1-3 new members. Thank you all!

Congratulations to Springfield Chapter 893 and Alexandria Chapter 232 for being the first and third national winners in recruiting 88 and 83 members respectively during the second quarter.

The VFC had a set back in 2008 membership numbers through July with a net loss of 835, with about 650 being special NARFE Premier Federal Credit Union members who were given a one year membership by the credit union and decided not renew.

Rep. Tom Davis Luncheon – The Virginia Federation held a luncheon in Arlington on July 22nd to honor the retiring 11th District Congressman who has been a great friend of NARFE, federal employees and retirees in support of fairness in annuities, timely COLAs, FEHBP and sponsor of Premium Conversion. There were 92 attending from 19 chapters, plus Margaret Baptist, National NARFE President and Joe Beaudoin, Region X Vice President.

VFC Board of Directors Changes – Oscar Honeycutt, Senior State Legislation Representative has moved to North Carolina due to health issues and to be near his son and daughter. Dennis Martin has retired as Membership Chair and Shirley Keys will step into the position. On October 31st Wilton Ward will retire and Barbara McDiarmid will become the Alzheimer's Chair.

NARFE National Convention – Many of our members will be in Louisville September 7-12 to take an active part in voting for the National Resident Officers and dealing with 82 Resolutions. Some of the more important ones deal with NARFE dues/single dues; honorary memberships; one member one vote; whether to eliminate the Vice President position; to combine the

Secretary and Treasurer positions; whether to establish a Chief Operations Officer position; whether to establish a new NEB position with emphasis upon active federal employee initiatives; and to develop the new National Legislative Agenda.

Meet your Candidates – Chapters are encouraged to meet with their respective Congressional candidates to discuss NARFE's issues. Pat Taylor, VFC Public Relations Chair, is working to schedule a NARFE sponsored Senatorial debate at Christopher Newport University.

2008 VFC Goals:

Alzheimer's – Raise \$55,000 – July status \$18,986.

Dues Withholding 5% increase – July status 4.1%.

Reduce Non-Renewal Rate by 10% compared to 2007 (2475 drops) – Jan-Jul status 2022 drops.

NARFE PAC – \$85,000 in 2007/2008 – status \$63,074

State Political Fund – Raise \$12,000 – status \$820.

As you can see, we have challenges to achieve these goals by the end of the year. Please make all efforts possible to assist in reaching these goals. At the July VFC Board Meeting we decided to discontinue the goal to increase membership by 5% since recruitment is pretty good, but non-renewals need special attention.

Recruitment and Retention – NARFE uses special OPM mailings to recent federal retirees in the spring and fall. The Spring 2008 mailing went to 47,000 potential members and the return was 3050 (6.5%). The fall mailing anticipates 62,000 names. Chapters are encouraged to participate in local opportunities to “Sell NARFE” among friends, former agencies, health fairs, pre-retirement seminars, etc. Retention begins when new members join; welcome them to the chapter meetings make them feel comfortable, get them involved in activities and have interesting chapter programs. Make every effort to personally contact chapter members who receive a 2nd notice for renewal and those who drop

their membership, emphasize dues withholding and explain the value of NARFE to protect their benefits.

R. David Smith, davesmith54@msn.com

1st VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I am very pleased to report that the VFC has a very active, involved Operations Group of Area Vice Presidents (AVP) carrying on the business of NARFE in Virginia this year. We were sorry to see four long time, experienced AVP's not run for office, but we were fortunate to have six veterans continue on and to have four interested, involved members come on as new AVP's. The resigning AVP's are Bob Boyd Area 3, Jim Nobles Area 5, George Hawkins Area 6, and Richard Raybold Area 10. The new AVP's are Jack McMurchy Area 3, Jessie Barksdale Area 5, Del Dyer Area 6, and Dick Giangerelli Area 10. The six that stayed are Sharon Rose Area 1, Betty Warren Area 2, Joe Lee Area 4, Luther Santiful Area 7, Don Shiffert Area 8 and Bill Masterson Area 9. The current 10 AVP's will have articles included in this issue of the VFC Notes.

I've attended three chapter meetings – Falls Run 2343, Eastern Shore 1175, and Danville 1011. The challenges we are facing with membership retention was the topic at each. I also participated in development of the State Legislative Plan, attended the Congressman Tom Davis luncheon, and represented NARFE at the Virginia League of Postmasters convention held in Bristol. I am happy to report that two postmasters attending the convention joined NARFE as members.

My major effort during this next quarter will be to work with the AVP's and chapters to see what we can do to improve our retention rate and to see an increase in the numbers of new members

During this quarter, I have been actively involved in planning for the 2009 VFC Convention which will be held in Reston next May. Areas 9 & 10 will be hosting the convention and we are fortunate to have had so many members volunteer to chair or work on the various committees. We are moving right along and are looking forward to a very successful event. At the same time, I've been working with the Area 1, 2, and 4 AVP's to identify the location for the 2010 VFC convention. Right now, it looks like we'll be having that convention in the Virginia Beach-Hampton-Williamsburg area. Sharon Rose, Betty Warren, and Joe Lee are looking for the best location and we will be making a recommendation to the VFC board at the October board meeting.

At the same time, the VFC President has tasked me to track delegates attending the 2008 National Convention which will take place in Louisville Kentucky during September. Right now it looks like every chapter will be represented this year. I do have a very sad note to report - Mike Michel, who has been very active in

NARFE for many years, was scheduled to attend the convention as the Lead Delegate for Peninsula Chapter 682. Mike passed away July 30, 2008. He served in many NARFE positions including chapter president and Area Vice President. He challenged us all and by doing so forced us to do a better job. Mike will be missed.

In closing, please remember the 2008 VFC Convention Theme – Working Together Today for a Better Tomorrow. That's the VFC and NARFE way. We need to continue to do all we can to protect our earned benefits and to convince those that aren't members to join with us in this effort. It's not going to be easy, but it can be done.

William F. Martin, VFC 1st Vice President,
narfe1472@comcast.net



Bill Martin and Carolyn Wilson with Margaret Baptist, NARFE National President at Rep. Tom Davis Luncheon.

2ND VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

First, thanks to all who voted for me to remain the VFC 2nd VP for another year. I appreciate it and hope to serve all NARFE members well.

In March 2008, HQS NARFE posted the schedule for Postal Conventions and I began working on getting these conventions covered by members in the VFC. Informational tables were set up at the following conventions:

- NAPS Convention, Charlottesville, 7 June, Carolyn Wilson, 2nd VP, VFC
- National League of Postmasters, Bristol, VA, 18-20 June, Bill Martin, 1st VP, VFC
- NAPUS Convention, Charlottesville, 13-16 June, Barbara Nugent, VFC PRS Coordinator

Eleven new members were recruited at these conventions.

May 2008 brought the TRIAD Senior Days at Chesterfield County and Petersburg, VA. Both TRIAD events had tables set up, Carolyn Wilson, Barbara and Dennis Nugent manned the Chesterfield table and Jack

McMurphy and members of the Petersburg Chapter manned the table at the Petersburg event. I attended and participated at the Petersburg event also. TRIADs are located all over the State of Virginia and provide a great venue for NARFE.

June 2008, NARFE and the VFC were represented at the Fort Lee, VA Civilian Welfare Active and Retired Luncheon. I was invited to make a few remarks and also to have a table. When I requested a show of hands of NARFE members, easily 70% were in attendance. This Luncheon is held every year and Colonial Heights Chapter 1472 and Petersburg Chapter 28 always have a great showing.

The State Legislative Meeting was held on June 16th. I was in attendance and participated in the VFC finalizing the State Legislative Plan.

Fredericksburg Chapter 90 held a Saturday meeting on 21 June. This was an attempt to get current employees and members to attend. There was a good showing of retired members and two current employees attended. Charles Delaplane, VFC National Legislative Committee Chair, and I attended and made remarks.

July 2008, Piedmont Chapter 2080 extended an invitation to attend an evening dinner meeting to current employees. Although the attendance wasn't as large as hoped, two new members joined. Duane Benton, President, had asked for my help in getting set up for the meeting and I gladly assisted him.

The VFC Board Meeting was held in Charlottesville, 27-29 July. I attended this meeting and feel that a lot was accomplished.

The program chairs have been very active and as Dave mentioned in his narrative, we have two new program chairs. Welcome to Shirley and Barbara and I will assist them in any way I can.

*Carolyn Wilson 2nd VP, VFC
narfe1472@comcast.net*

NATIONAL LEGISLATION

As this is written, on August 11, Congress has adjourned until after Labor Day, and precious little will be accomplished between the time they return and their October adjournment to campaign for the November elections. I think it's safe to say NARFE's priorities will not be addressed in what remains of the current 110th Congress. In fact, reports are that appropriations won't even be addressed, that government operations into 2009 will be rolled into one large Continuing Resolution extending into January for the 111th Congress to deal with, and that there will be no "rump" session. Which may be a good thing?

Recall that NARFE's absolute first priority is to protect the benefits we have. Early in 2009 our current benefits may come under pressure. In 2007 two bills

were introduced, S. 2063 and H.R. 3655, which would start a process of imposing "fiscal responsibility" on the Government. The two bills are caught in the same Congressional gridlock everyone else is enjoying and likely may not pass this Congress, but we may see them again next year. And they may stand some chance of passage, because they adopt an approach similar to that which was used for the politically difficult Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process. Basically, they legislated a formula for enacting a subsequent bill, which would impose fiscal responsibility on all federal outlays. National is vigilant, but many NARFE members may not be aware of the growing concern inside and outside of Congress about the lack of control on the entitlements portion of the budget, which, of course, includes our annuities, FEHBP, and COLA's, along with Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and other unappropriated programs. This is some of the background behind National's current focus on existing entitlements in the questionnaire which was distributed for "meet the candidates" forums.

As to those forums, NARFE has posted on its web page a "questionnaire" they would like to see used in meeting with candidates for Congressional seats. And we are not limited to the month of August for organizing forums. Please plan events for September and October as well, and report those events to me as they happen – I need to summarize Virginia's activities for NFVP Joe Beaudoin and for National.

Regarding NARFE-PAC, as of June 30 Virginia NARFE members had contributed \$63,074 to our political action fund. Virginia is doing well in comparison with other States (second only to California), but we're still almost \$22,000 from reaching our \$85,000 2-year goal. Nationally, NARFE-PAC had collected less than \$1 million by June 30 (\$923,800 – unusually low), and we really need larger numbers to help our voice be heard on Capitol Hill. Please contribute.

As to NARFE-PAC contributions to Virginia candidates, for the 19-month period ending July 31 NARFE has contributed the following to Virginia candidates:

- ❖ Rep. Thelma Drake (R-2nd) - \$1,000 on September 24, 2007
- ❖ Rep. Robert "Bobby" Scott (D-3rd) – \$2,000 on May 9, 2007
- ❖ Rep. Jim Moran (D-8th) - \$10,000 in two \$5,000 tranches, on June 15, 2007 and July 30, 2008;
- ❖ Rep. Frank Wolf (R-10th) – \$10,000 also in two \$5,000 tranches, on December 4, 2007 and July 30, 2008; and
- ❖ Rep. Tom Davis (R-11th) - \$5,000 on February 26, 2007.

I expect we'll see other disbursements before the November elections.

Charles Delaplane

STATE LEGISLATION

The VFC board of directors has adopted a set of legislative priorities for the 2009 session of the General Assembly and all members are encouraged to personally make every member of the General assembly aware of our concerns. Virginia has a true citizen legislature. When not in session members will be home earning a living. They are your neighbors and available for discussing issues. Please make an effort to contact your representative this summer and fall, waiting until the session begins in January is usually too late. Most bills are submitted before early December. Here is the Legislative plan that was adopted.

Protect retirement funds including 401-k and other investment vehicles from legal settlements.

Currently federal retirement, SS retirement funds and TSP accounts are protected from garnishment and many other legal settlements, but not so once you retire and move TSP funds into a 401k plan. For FERS employees this represents 1/3 of their retirement that could be subject to seizure.

Encourage VDOT to alter transportation policies to accommodate the needs of the rapidly increasing senior's population:

Previous legislative actions have called for changes in state Transportation policy to recognize the special needs of the increasingly aging population, but there is little evidence that this is happening.

Policy must call for larger and more visible signage for street signs, and route numbers. Lane markers and edge designators must be clearer and visible under adverse weather conditions.

Public transportation to meet the needs of seniors needs to be developed in all areas of the state. Seniors who relied on their own private transportation options need help converting to the use of public facilities.

Nursing Homes in the state are still a concern. Many issues identified in the JLARC10 study still need addressing:

Implement and enforce certification requirements for all workers, both professional and non-professional, in nursing homes;

Implement and enforce a maximum caregiver to patient ratio in nursing homes;

Require nursing homes to provide more options to patients for obtaining prescriptions and other needed drugs and medicines.

Implement programs to secure and encourage the utilization of ombudsmen for patients

Implement a program to encourage more people to become ombudsmen for patients; and

Implement and require activity programs, both mental and physical, for patients in nursing homes.

Implement a requirement for geriatric training for medical professionals and medical support personnel.

Encourage more seniors to age in place by increasing the tax credit from \$500 to \$1000 for residents who upgrade their homes to increase the accessibility and visit ability as defined in Virginia code 58.1-339.7.

Current law covers benefits for design of new construction, and for retrofitting older dwellings, but provides only a \$500 residential tax credit which is insignificant when compared to actual costs. With the stagnant real estate market many homeowners find it advantageous to remain in their own homes, and would like to make modifications to make them easier to live in as their ability to get around is compromised with age. The current program adopted in the 2007 session of the Legislature, was implemented January 1 2008, but little knowledge of it has spread to the senior population of the commonwealth.

Change the Rules of the House of Delegates to require formal reporting of votes taken in House Subcommittees

Placing these votes on the web site for all to see will remove the veil of secrecy that gives the appearance that the Leadership is unwilling to take responsibility for actions taken on behalf of the citizens of the Commonwealth.

Bill Schmidt VFC State Chair

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

As a result of non-renewal of "Credit Union" members which hit the VFC in July, the membership is down over 3.5% for the year. Although this NARFE initiative was not as successful as hoped, the VFC did retain nearly 14% of the "Credit Union" members through renewals. Dues withholding in the VFC has achieved a 3.6% increase for the year and is well on its way for reaching its goal of 5% increase for 2008. With this initiative and an increased emphasis on retention, we should see improvements in the retention of members.

Dennis Martin

SERVICE REPORT

With a little forethought and preparation, most falls around the home can be prevented. We owe it to ourselves and to our loved ones to invest a little time and money in personal fall prevention. Let's begin with the most obvious steps that cost nothing; and then we'll cover some more extensive and expensive ways to eliminate hazards around the home.

1. At your next doctor's appointment, review the medications you take, with a special concern for any

whose side effects may affect alertness, balance or mobility. Negotiate changes, with medical advice, to decrease likelihood of falls. For example, some meds are more safely taken at nap time or bed time, or when you are otherwise less active.

2. Have you ever noticed how toddlers negotiate steps sideways, one at a time, holding on to the railing with both hands? This also works well for any elderly person who no longer feels secure on steps, stairs, or changes in elevation. Sideways gives much more leeway in stepping up or down. To take one step at a time, placing both feet on the new level, reduces even the highest stairs to a manageable effort. Of course, one can sit to rest on any step along the way.

3. Consider “retiring” all step stools, stepladders, and extension ladders that you have always used around the house. Outsource cleaning the gutters, roof repairs, painting and other chores. Ask others to change ceiling light bulbs and dust high out-of-reach places. Clean windows with extension-handled squeegees while standing on the ground. For your own safety, don’t go higher than the first or second rung of any ladder; and use one hand for the task, the other hand for yourself.

4. If your tub, shower, or commodes do not have safety grab bars, most pharmacies and home repair places offer them. Plumbers can order and install any length you need. The grab bars also can be used for steps at sunken living rooms, or outside wherever you like. Then use them until they become a habit, a routine way to move safely about your home, garage and yard.

5. Reduce or eliminate “fall hazards” related to floors and floor coverings. Use a no-slip wax. Get rubber-backed bathroom rugs. Store small rugs that are trip-hazards. Are some thresholds between rooms or at entryways too high? Look at your own footwear in terms of traction—the old slippers may be worn out and dangerous. Consider using a cane or a walker as a fall prevention device, wherever you move around the house. “Pride goeth before the fall.”

6. When late evening or bedtime comes, check on night lights, lamps and other lighting to be sure you can see where you are and where you are going. The danger is not just stubbed toes but also disorientation and falls. Anywhere you need to go should be dimly lit rather than in complete darkness. Or don’t be shy about turning on lights at night as you need them. One of the challenges of elderly existence is our being less able to see in the dark, and so more likely to fall.

7. Consider re-arranging or eliminating some furnishings to create a “safe passage” from room to room for yourself, particularly when using a cane, walker, or wheelchair. Level the playing field wherever you can, and sometimes adding a small ramp, eliminating a threshold, or removing architectural barriers provides for

greater personal safety. Sometimes low seating—chairs, sofas, etc.—should be raised or replaced with higher items from which it is easier to stand.

8. Were you to fall, could you rescue yourself? Try getting down on the floor and getting up, for practice. Or do you have a handy cell phone to call for help? Or have you considered wearing a “panic button” or other device? More embarrassing than falling is having taken no thought for declaring an emergency or summoning nearby help! Do you have a “buddy system” where someone calls, or you call them, to be sure all is well?

9. Some homes need extensive and expensive renovations, as residents grow older. Like what? Entry ramps, bathroom modifications, wider interior doorways, lever-style doorknobs, carbon monoxide and smoke detectors, kitchen cabinets and stoves and sinks that are more accessible, front-loading laundry machines, louder doorbells and phone bells, or other specific devices tailored to the elderly residents.

Look out for yourself by admitting there are possibilities of falling, by changing your home environment to make it safer, and by asking for help where you can no longer make changes yourself. Remember that “falls” are one of the basic reasons that the elderly are declared no longer able to live independently. Extend the years you can live in your own home, by taking thought for your own safety around the house.

Sue and Jim Righter Co-Service Chairs of the VFC



Ann Collins, Tom and Jeannemarie Davis and Dave Smith at VFC Luncheon July 22nd.

PUBLIC RELATIONS CHAIR REPORT

The past few months have been busy with visits to clubs and other meetings. I was invited by Area VII VP Luther Santiful to attend their quarterly meeting. Although the 400+ mile drive in one day was a bit tiring, I was truly happy I attended. Luther runs a great meeting and the interaction of those in attendance was excellent.

I was especially impressed by their State Legislative Coordinator's report! I was invited to attend the Fauquier Chapter meeting in Warrenton to talk about membership recruitment. Knowing that Marie Collins is the most effective recruiter in the state, I asked her to accompany me. While there we put on a skit that presented a person walking by a NARFE table, stopping to talk about NARFE, and then watched Marie "work her magic" – she taught those in attendance where to stand at the table to be most effective, what questions to ask of a potential member, how to present a quick overview of NARFE and the benefits of membership, how to encourage joining, when to present literature as well as what to put on the application (membership number so credit is applied correctly). Our skit was extremely well received and deemed to be most informative! I was also invited to attend the Churchland Chapter luncheon where I gave a talk on how PR can be used by a chapter - advertising events, recruiting members, etc.

In July I attended the VFC Board meeting where we had a great exchange of ideas and information. I look forward to these meetings because I learn so much, and I have the opportunity to announce plans for upcoming events. This time my announcement was that we are "closing in" on a firm date for a U.S. Senatorial debate between Jim Gilmore and Mark Warner in the Newport News area in late September. We are still working out details, but it's looking promising!! If everything works out, we should have about 1500 attendees including NARFE members, local officials and members of political parties, local college students, members of sponsoring businesses and organizations, and members of the general public. It's been a long and trying effort, but I'm hoping in a few weeks I can report that the VFC successfully sponsored a debate involving candidates for Virginia's U.S. Senate seat.

In October I'll be working with the Suffolk Chapter at the annual Peanut Festival being held in the Hampton Roads area. This is a huge event that brings out thousands of attendees. I've provided them with 400 bags and other handouts; they are busy stuffing the bags, scheduling workers to staff the NARFE booth, and happily anticipating recruiting new members. This will be my first year to work this event, and I extend my thanks to the Chapter for inviting me to join them.

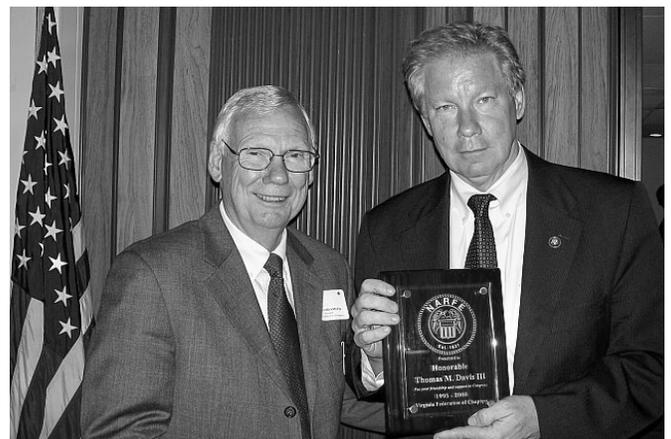
I serve on the TRIAD Council for Newport News as the official NARFE representative for the Peninsula area. TRIAD is an excellent source for interacting with organizations that serve citizens, especially seniors. August 14th we are hosting a "SHRED IT" where seniors will be given preference on having old documents shredded by huge commercial equipment. Peninsula Chapter 682 will have a table where they can interact with potential members and/or

get "dropped" members back. The best part – both the shredding and the table are FREE! Please check in your own area to find out what programs might be available through TRIAD and/or Senior Navigator. Joining with another organization can be a win/win situation. We need to get our name and logo out in more places where it will be seen. Anything to catch the eye of those walking by – hopefully they'll stop long enough to hear about NARFE, perhaps to pick up some material that lists our national membership phone number for future reference.

Since NARFE Mart is no longer in business, we can now find our own vendor for items bearing the NARFE logo. You may have a business in your area you'd like to contact for materials, but if I may be of assistance, please contact me at **757-599-5408** or m spat1942@aol.com. I have found an excellent vendor that can provide embroidery or imprinting of the NARFE logo on shirts, hats, golf jackets, fleece jackets, etc. – excellent quality at reasonable prices – and I'll gladly provide the vendor's contact information. Also, if your chapter is interested in purchasing handouts (i.e., letter openers), please contact me so that we may order the item(s) in larger quantity since the cost per item drops with the number ordered. I can order under the VFC account and then your Chapter can reimburse the VFC. With funds so tight, this is a good way to get quality handouts at the best possible price.

In closing, I'd like to say that it's my honor to serve as your VFC PR Chair for a second year. I am open to your ideas and suggestions, and I'll do my best to assist you in any way that I can. Just call or send an e-mail!!!

Pat Taylor VFC Public Relations Chair



Dave Smith presentation to Rep. Tom Davis at VFC Luncheon July 22nd.

- ❖ Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you'd preferred to talk.

AREA I NOTES

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of Mike Michel, Chapter 682 President on July 29. Mike and his lovely wife Janie were long time supporters of NARFE. Having been a Chapter President and an Area Vice President, Mike was always ready to help and support me in my humble efforts as AVP. He was also not above prodding me not so gently when he thought I needed it. I will miss him as will our chapter members who benefited from his strong leadership and friendship.

During this period, I attended the Quarterly Board Meeting in Charlottesville (what a lovely place to have a board meeting). I held a quarterly Council of Chapters meeting in Newport News in June. As usual, this was a good experience, especially for the chapter presidents who have the opportunity to exchange ideas during this time. It was also the first opportunity for us to welcome our newest chapter (Chapter 1823) into the Area I family. I also attended the State Legislative Committee meeting, hosted by Bill Schmidt, held in Richmond, in June. It was a good session in which we developed a draft 2009 State Legislative Plan for VFC Board approval in July.

Three of the four chapters are dark during the summer. Chapter 682 is not and they held their annual "Picnic" at Ft Monroe this year. Altho somewhat subdued due to Mike's passing, it was reported indeed a wonderful time of friendship and sharing. They also had representatives (Mike and Janie) at the reception for Tom Davis in Washington DC in July. The chapter is working with local city councils on a resolution, to be presented during regular council session, to Congressman Bobby Scott in appreciation for his support, hopefully, during the month of August. Chapter 682 has decided to continue giving \$5 to members signing up for dues withholding even if the VFC does not continue their program to do so. Chapter 682 is also knee deep in preparing for hosting a Candidates Forum for the senatorial candidates in September to be held at CNU'S Ferguson Center. This is the brain child of Pat Taylor, VFC Program Chair, who has worked tirelessly to make this come about. Congratulations to Pat. Paul Componation (Chapter 1757 President) and Jim Landry (Chapter 1823 President) have both had their ups and downs health wise in the past few months, but, hopefully, are on their way to full recovery. We wish them the best.

Marie Collins, Chapter 682 Membership Chair, CDL for Congressional District 3, and NARFE Recruiter extraordinary, has attended two preretirement seminars. On May 20, at Forts Eustis and Monroe, signed up 12 "on the spot" and again on July 29th. She also had a

NARFE vendor table on May 22 at Colonial Harbor Retirement Center, Yorktown at which she distributed 50 kits at the six hour health fair. She also accompanied Pat Taylor, VFC PR Chair to the Warrenton Chapter on May 13. They presented a "skit" on "hosting" a vendor table at a street fair which was very well received. They also presented the "skit" at Chapter 682's meeting in July. In my humble opinion, it could be developed into a great training tool for the chapters. I can never say enough good things about Marie. She is tireless in her efforts to promote NARFE and its goals. In case I haven't said it recently, Marie, thank you, thank you for all your efforts on behalf of NARFE!

One of the fun things I've done this summer is visit potential convention sites for 2010 with Joe and Norma Lee and Betty Warren. It can't be anything but fun when you pal around with those three!

Sharon Rose, Area I VP

AREA II NEWS NOTES

It's that time of the year again. The chapters are dark except summer luncheons. There are no meetings during the summer months. The Chapters will begin business as usual in September. Before the summer break, all chapter meetings were as scheduled. They continue to have good speakers and some luncheon meetings. The officers are working hard to retain their members.

Donald Warren, CDL and chapter officers plan to visit Congresswoman Thelma Drake, during the August lobby month.

Metro 5 Chapter President, Lynne Pipis, is busy planning the first Health Fair for Retiree's. It will be held on Wednesday November 12th at the Workforce Development Center, Norfolk VA.

Virginia Beach Chapter 974 Alzheimer's Chairperson, Liz Austin and her committee hosted a Silent Auction and Dinner for Alzheimer research. It was well attended and lots of fun.

Local candidates and representatives running for Mayor and City Council in Virginia Beach have been invited to speak at the Virginia Beach and Seaside Chapter meetings during the months of September and October.

President Ron Butler is working on establishing an evening meeting for the AFE's. It is hoped that the evening meetings will attract more AFE's who can't attend daytime meetings.

There will be two delegates attending the National Convention. All chapters have already assigned a proxy or delegate to represent their chapter.

Area II VP, Betty L. Warren

AREA III NEWS

Five of the chapters do not hold meetings during July or August; South of the James and Midlothian are the only ones that do. Attendance at Midlothian remains high in the summer, but is decreased at the South of the James meetings. Most chapters hold indoor spring luncheons in June due to the heat, but Midlothian holds a traditional outdoor picnic in September which is well attended. Imperial Plaza holds a Trading Post in July and many members sell baked goods and handcrafts and donate the proceeds to Alzheimer's Research. This little chapter does well, and had the second highest percentage of contributions in the VFC in 2007.

As a first-year Area VP, I spent the early summer organizing and filled all six coordinator slots by early July. Three were members who had previously served Bob Boyd (former Area VP), and the others were new. I also visited two chapters, 1138 and 1510 before the summer hiatus and assisted the presidents in presenting life membership awards and summarized highlights of the VFC convention.

Overall membership has dropped since January. Colonial Heights reported a gain, Midlothian is doing well, and South of the James, Imperial Plaza, and Tuckahoe are holding steady. Petersburg lost a large number the first quarter (to deaths) and is now slowly gaining. Richmond is losing (due to deaths) and more transfers out than gains. Colonial Heights, Petersburg, and Midlothian have all recruited from booths at respective city or county TRIADS, and Colonial Heights and Petersburg also recruited at the annual Ft Lee Civilian welfare Fund Luncheon in June. Chapters with varied program speakers, telephone tree callers before meeting, and friendly greeters have larger attendance than do chapters who do not have these activities.

I conducted a Council of Chapters meeting July 25th at the Chester Shoney's presidents (or a representative), two coordinators, newsletter editors, and the VFC president in attendance. The primary topics were the status of recruitment and organization of the area newsletter. Larry Garelick of Richmond is the newly appointed Public Relations *coordinator (editor-in-chief)*. We also discussed upgrading chapter WebPages, problems with errors on the M-11 reports which both VFC First Vice President Bill Martin and Region X Vice President Joe Beaudoin are helping with national NARFE staff members. We missed longtime Senior State Legislative Representative, Oscar Honeycutt who has relocated to Henderson, NC (for health reasons) and Tuckahoe president Carroll Graham who is recuperating from major surgery. They were both missed at the Area III

Council Meeting and the VFC Board Meeting which followed July 27th to 29th.

Jack W. McMurchy, Area III Vice President

AREA IV REPORT

Greetings and best wishes to the members and officers of Area IV. Suffolk Chapter 1743 has begun preparations for a booth at the Suffolk Peanut Festival, Oct. 9 - 12, 2008. Matching Funds have been requested and expected to be approved. We desire to have all Chapters in Area IV to participate. President Joe Silberholtz will prepare a schedule of time periods to man the Vendor Table - ranging from 2 to 4 hours. Times will be listed to suit those participating and not to interfere with each personal commitment. Alternates will be listed to fill vacant positions as required.

Joining together will provide a good opportunity to promote NARFE, present information pamphlets, magazines, membership application forms to those who are eligible to join NARFE. In addition the task will be lessened if all chapters will support this endeavor. Also, you have an opportunity to eat peanuts as you desire and fill cups for those visitors joining our NARFE table display. Please submit your list of names from each chapter in Area IV to Joe Silberholtz before October 1, 2008.

Our next endeavor will be to participate in the Health Fair at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard sometime in November (specific date not set at this time). Linda Fletcher is the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Coordinator for this Area. Other Health organizations will be participating and listed in the OPM pamphlet when distributed in September 2008.

Your full support is requested.

Joseph D. Lee Area IV Vice President

AREA V

As the new Area V Vice President, I want to acknowledge that everyone has been very cooperative and patient. My goals for 2009 are as follows:

Provide assistance to enhance recruitment, retention, and membership in Area V.

Encourage members in Area V to become active in local chapter meetings, activities, and the Annual VFC Convention.

Increase the "dues withholding" rate within Area V.

Since elected, I attended the VFC Board meeting on July 27-29, 2008. I also visited Chapters 110, 1069, and 2080.

Overall membership in Area V is good - we lose a few and gain a few. The chapter presidents understand that our main focus is retention. On June 14, Chapter 2080 held a special recruitment meeting in an attempt to attract new members. Attendance was small, but one

person joined NARFE, and a second individual committed to becoming a member. The lesson learned is that if we cancel meetings due to the small turnouts, we might miss opportunities to recruit new members.

On June 24, 2008, Chapter 1011 held a special Members' Appreciation Meeting. Bill Martin, 1st V. President, VFC, was the guest speaker. The meeting was advertised in the chapter's newsletter and the local newspapers. Although we did not gain any new members from the meeting, the information exchanged was outstanding. Bill provided many handouts which I intend to share during my chapter visits.

The update of Area V web pages is on-going. This seemingly "no-brainer" has taken more time and energy than I ever imagined. However, the assistance that we continue to receive from Stan Palen is magnificent, and with his continued support, this too shall be accomplished.

Currently, a total of three members from Area V will be attending the National Convention in September. I will be attending as a delegate for my home chapter (Danville 1011). Proxies have been secured for all other chapters.

On a final note, I am coordinating an Area Council Meeting which I hope will be held in October.

Jessie Barksdale Area V, VP

AREA VI REPORT

I'm the new kid on the block taking over from GEORGE HAWKINS who has done an outstanding job for many years. I'm not sure how long I'll have to work to gain the hearts and minds of my assigned Chapters. George has such a nice way of working with folks to make them glad he is in their corner.

I've visited three of the four assigned to the Area. I'll get to the last one in early September. The Roanoke Chapter (III) takes two months off in the early summer and this year they really needed the time to rest after doing such an outstanding job of hosting the 2008 Convention in their town. They enjoyed their reconvening August Social. September will find them meeting in a new location, the Plantation Inn.

Chapter 1134 held its summer social in July and enjoyed learning about the Revolutionary war through the actions and eyes of two re-enactors. The Chapter is focusing its attention on recruitment and retention with the appointment of George Hawkins as chair of a membership committee. The group will also be focusing on ways to increase attendance at their meetings.

Wilderness Trail (1837) held its quarterly meeting in Wytheville in June with a fairly good attendance. They had an out-standing program on understanding Alzheimer's and related illnesses presented by a representative of the Roanoke Office of

the Alzheimer's Association. They too, are concerned about meeting attendance and plan to work on ways to increase participation. I have shared the work of Richard Murphy showing the number of retired federal employees, by zip code, assigned to their Chapter with them. Richard's work will help them focus their recruitment efforts.

I also shared Richard's work with the South West Highlands Chapter (2330). George Hawkins and I visited this Chapter in late June as the members gathered to decide whether to disband the Chapter or struggle on. The mood at the beginning of the meeting seemed to be "fold" as they were unable to find a replacement for Joe Schauer. Joe, a very active member who had served as Vice-President and President for several years, lives in the far corner of the Chapter and faced a trip of over 120 miles round trip to attend the meetings. After input from George and me the group decided to try to breathe new life into the Chapter. The two Joe's (Chase and Schauer) who have been either President or Vice-President since the chapter started agreed to share President pro-tem duties through November 2008. The group of eight officers and members present elected to forgo the mailing of the upcoming newsletter in favor of developing a member survey to canvas all the members with regard to attendance and member needs. They also agreed to look at the possibility of meeting in a more central location and to investigate attracting members from the eastern end of Tennessee. I helped them find the boundaries of their chapter as assigned by national headquarters. The survey is out. The search for a new meeting place is underway. A November membership meeting is in the planning stages. Things are looking up.

Del Dyer, Area VI Vice-President

AREA VII NOTE

Area VII continues to hold its own with memberships. All chapters have in place plans to address the elusive renewals. Membership chairs are trying their best to find a way to consistently have members renew on time and, hopefully, use dues withholding as necessary. Congratulations to all members who recruited members in recent months.

Most Area VII chapters have contacted state and national elected officials for meetings during the month of August. These efforts are in spite of vacations and the normal picnic season. The rare competitive congressional campaigns have members engaged in issues of concern to them because this year they see an opportunity to at least get the elected officials' attention. The Harrisonburg and Winchester chapters are leaders in getting elected officials to address their memberships. Since Area VII comprises three congressional districts,

significant coordination is necessary to schedule events during the campaign season.

Although very few Area VII members will be attending the national convention, each chapter will be represented by delegates or by proxy. I want to express my appreciation to chapter presidents and others who helped me work through the process of making sure all chapters are represented.

As we approach the chapter officer recruitment season, I am getting some indications that long-serving officers are desirous of relinquishing their respective offices. Such is expected, but each person similarly situated is avidly recruiting a replacement.

I, again, complement all Area VII chapters for the quality of programs at their monthly meetings that bring out large percentages of their respective memberships.

Luther L. Santiful, Area VII V

AREA VIII NEWS

Area VIII has been quite during the summer months of July and August as some of the chapters do not meet then. Chapter 90 Fredericksburg is having a picnic on August 16. Chapter 595 Colonial Beach is having a boat trip on August 20. Chapter 1885 Lake of the Woods is having a picnic September 25. Chapter 2065 Louisa had a picnic in July in which they invited the incumbent Republican Congressman and the Democrat challenger. Chapter 2112 Caroline had a picnic August 7. Chapter 2343 has invited the 1st District Congressman and the Democrat challenger to their September 4 meeting. Area VIII has lost 81 members so far this year.

I hope each chapter is using the monthly M112 report to contact members that have received their second notices to try to convince them to renew. We must turn around the loss of member by being proactive. Stress renewals and dues withholding to keep members. A common concern is lack of attendance at meetings. Good programs/speakers and a good newsletter or a phone tree to remind members to attend can help to increase attendance.

After the elections we have some serious challenges regardless of which candidate are elected. Congress will be looking for money to pay down the debt. Guess who will be one of the targets to cut spending? Government employees and retirees of course. So we need every member we have. *Donald H. Shiffert area VIII VP*

AREA X REPORT

This is my first VFC article since being elected Area X Vice President at the April 2008 VFC Convention. I am still trying to find my way in this position; but the seven Chapters in Area X are continuing on despite that. However, by the end of June

I was able to attend the monthly meetings at 3 of the 7 Chapters, in addition to my own Chapter, Dulles Chapter 1241. I had planned on attending the monthly membership meeting of a fourth Chapter during the last week in June; but last minute details for my youngest daughter's wedding on June 28th prevented that from occurring.

With the conclusion of the of the 2008 VFC Convention, Area IX and X Chapters started working in earnest to prepare for the 2009 VFC Convention in Reston, Virginia. All of the Chair positions have now been filled and volunteers for the committees are beginning to step up. The Convention, scheduled for April 30 thru May 2, 2009, should be a significant event. Shirley Keys, a member of Vienna-Oakton Chapter 1116 and the President of the Northern Virginia Caucus, which is composed of VFC Areas IX and X, will be the Chair of the 2009 VFC Convention.

Since the 2008 VFC Convention, the seven Chapters in Area X have been quite busy with the management of their programs. Most of the Chapters continued to hold their monthly membership meetings at their standard locations; however, Loudoun Chapter 1133 changed their meeting location and began meeting at The Dock at the Lansdowne Town Center. Both the Loudoun Chapter 1133 and the Vienna-Oakton Chapter 1116 ended their Spring meeting session with a picnic.

In May, several of the Chapters had one of their members recognized as an important contributor to their program at the 39th Annual Senior Recognition Ceremony sponsored by the Fairfax County Department of Community and Recreation Services.

In June, several of the Chapters sent representatives to a special Area X brainstorming meeting where proposals for the 2009 Virginia Political Action Plan were developed and discussed. These proposals were then presented at a VFC Legislative meeting on June 16th, and some became part of the proposed Plan approved by the VFC Board at the quarterly meeting in July.

No Area X Chapters met during the months of July and August. However, September will restart the schedule of Chapter meetings. The nomination of Chapter officers for 2009 and the audits of Chapter Treasurers books, as well as membership retention issues, will be high on the list of priorities.

Since becoming Area X Vice President, I have become deeply involved with the Northern Virginia Aging Network (NVAN) and have been acting as the NARFE representative to this group. We have succeeded in coordinating the VFC 2009 Virginia Political Action Plan with the NVAN 2009 Political Action Plan. This will, hopefully, give both Plans more impetus and backing.

There is a lot more work that I believe needs to be done in VFC Area X. An Area X planning meeting will be held during August to develop an action plan and schedule.

Richard Giangerelli, Area X VP

ALZHEIMERS VFC NOTES

My report to the VFC Board at its recent meeting shows that the VFC Alzheimer's donations for 2008 thru June 30 totaled \$17,106.LF1. This is *approximately* \$5000 less than 2007 thru June 30. Donations were received from 42 chapters. We face a real challenge to meet our goal of 155,000 for the year. But we can and I believe we will.

A March 25, 08 news release from the national Alzheimer's Association stated that "Medicare currently spends more than three times as much for people with Alzheimer's and other dementias than for the average beneficiary." In a plea for increased federal funds for Alzheimer's research the release further states that "with one out of eight baby boomers at risk for developing this disease there is no clearer, predictable public health crisis facing the United States today." As NARFE members our support for Alzheimer's research over the years has supported 37 research projects, including research on brain imaging, genetics and vascular factors as they relate to the occurrence and treatment of Alzheimer's. Our continuing support can be crucial in developing preventive and treatment measures for fighting this disease.

As previously advised, beginning in November, all chapters are to send donation checks to Mrs. Barbara McDiarmid, 17181 Four Seasons Drive, Dumfries, VA 22025, my replacement as your VFC Alzheimer's Chair.

Wilton Ward Alzheimer's Chair

REGION X REPORT

This will be my last report as your Region X Vice President. By now, you are probably aware that I am a candidate for the National Vice President's position. I have enjoyed being the RVP during the past two years and I want to thank all my friends and supporters in Virginia for making my job so easy and enjoyable. Jane and I have enjoyed attending the various events/conventions/meetings and we will miss not doing that in the future. For the past 21 years I have been an officer in Virginia (13 years in the VFC) and during that time and the six years as an officer in Chapter 180 (Winchester), we have met many great members whose friendship we will cherish in the future.

From September 7-11, NARFE will be meeting in Louisville to conduct our bi-annual business. NARFE will be setting their legislative agenda for the 111th Congress and will consider approximately 82 resolutions (that is down from approximately twice that many in

2006). These resolutions, if adopted, would change the way NARFE does business. There will be resolutions to:

- ❖ Eliminate the VP's position (National Vice President),
- ❖ Single dues (NARFE dues),
- ❖ Hire a Chief Operating Officer (COO),
- ❖ Eliminate Honorary Membership and Life Membership,
- ❖ Increase and/or decrease the pay for our National Officers,
- ❖ Reinstatement of the reduced dues for AFE's (Active Federal Employees), etc.

As you can see by the condensed list above, the delegates at this convention will have many important decisions to make.

I would like to share with you my views on what could be a major challenge to our annuities and/or earned benefits in 2009. The 111th Congress and our new President will be looking at ways to reduce the budget because of the huge deficit and obligations that our country has (around \$70 trillion), the declining dollar, the increase in commodities (including gas), the cost of the two wars, the stimulus program, etc. Our annuities will be in their 'gun sights'. Many companies, such as; GM, airlines, other auto makers and other companies have cut or eliminated health benefits and retirement benefits, Congress will be looking at our FEHBP (which most Americans envy) and they could very easily reduce our benefits or increase our contributions for our health care. They could delay or eliminate COLA's. They could implement 'means testing' for Medicare. They could pass HSA's. Congress can and might take a number of actions to implement their "Pay As You Go" program. We need to stay alert for any adverse proposed bills emanating from Congress and once an adverse bill has been identified, we all need to be ready to contact our Congressional leaders to convince them to "kill" these bills before they hit the floor of Congress.

Thanks again for working with Jane and me during the past 21 years and we look forward to seeing many of you at various functions and conventions in the future.

God Bless all of you.

Joseph A Beaudoin Region X Vice President

- ❖ You can't do much about the length of your life, but you can do something about the width and depth.