



# National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

## VFC Notes-Winter 2009

*Serving Current, Former & Retired Federal Civilian Employees-  
Spouses and Survivor Annuities*

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### **FEDERATION PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

**Good News** - This quarter has been a good one for the Virginia Federation and its members – First, CSRS and FERS retirees received their full COLA. All of us should thank NARFE for this. Second, Virginia now has 57 chapters! Shenandoah County Chapter 2358 has been added to Area 7. This is due to the hard work of their members, primarily Wilhelmina Santiful and Area VII Vice President Luther Santiful. Thru their efforts, and agreements reached with the officers of Harrisonburg Chapter 164 and Winchester Chapter 180, the new chapter was formed. Although I hear about NARFE chapters closing, Virginia continues to add them. Third, every chapter in Virginia has a full slate of officers. I continue to wonder why folks hesitate to take on chapter duties. We are the organization with the sole purpose of protecting **our** earned benefits. This in addition to an aggressive state legislation program working to improve conditions for senior citizens – as we all know, there are very few of us that do not already fit this category and even those that are still “young” and don’t feel the “senior” tag fits, will ultimately reach that goal if their life goes as I’m sure they want it to.

**VFC Board of Director's Changes** – I had hoped the VFC board would be stable for the rest of the year, but during this quarter a couple of folks have indicated they were going to leave after the 2009 VFC Convention. I want to add here that the success of the federation, and all the chapters, is due to the outstanding work of its officers and members. The VFC continues to have the good

fortune of outstanding committee chairs and other appointees handling federation work. I’m in the process of identifying replacements for Charlie Delaplaine-National Legislation; Jim & Sue Righter-Service; and Barbara McDiarmid-Alzheimer’s. The positive thing here is that there are many folks out there that are willing to take on these positions and I’m sure will do a good job.

**Welcome Back** - I want to welcome Dick Edwards back on the VFC board. Dick has agreed to work with us to help improve our electronic communication ability. The VFC has over 4,200 members with email addresses on the system, but with over 20,000 members, we should have considerably more. Then, about 6% of the ones we have are wrong. Dick will be working with the chapters to correct those that are wrong and encourage those not yet on the system to join. Some members are concerned that their email address will be shared with someone outside NARFE – they are wrong. We are currently sending important timely messages using the NARFE GEMS system and sure would like to add every member with an email address to the system. If you would like to consider adding your address to the system or have questions, please contact Dick at dick@vanarfe.org. He’ll do what he can to get you an answer or on the system.

**2009 VFC Convention** – The convention committee is working hard preparing for the 2009 VFC Convention which will be held at the Reston Hyatt Regency May 1-3. We are planning an exciting convention with something

for everyone. We hope to have a forum for the four Virginia Governor candidates R. Creigh Deeds, Terry McAuliffe, Brian Moran, and Bob McDonnell with the VFC State Legislation Program Chair Bill Schmidt as the moderator. We are also working to get Senator Mark Warner as a speaker, possibly at our banquet. Then, there are plans to have Mark Keene, CFP who has an article each month in the NARFE magazine do a seminar on finances to include TSP. Although this will be an expensive convention, we are depending on all our members to do what they can to help us offset some of the expenses – selling ads and of course attending the convention and staying at the Reston Hyatt Regency hotel. Please contact Shirley Keyes, Convention Chairman at [shirleykeyes@aol.com](mailto:shirleykeyes@aol.com) or Carolyn Wilson, Convention Coordinator at [narfe1472@comcast.net](mailto:narfe1472@comcast.net) to find out how you can help. All of the forms are available at [www.vanarfe.org](http://www.vanarfe.org). Also, ads that sell for \$100 or more will be placed on our web site thru May 15<sup>th</sup>. Again, all of our plans also include all of the normal things that are associated with VFC conventions such as election of officers and area vice presidents as well as considerations for future convention locations.

**NARFE Federation Presidents** – I am sending the Virginia Federation (VFC) notes to all the presidents of the other state federations and asking them to add me to their federation newsletter. I just received the Missouri NARFE News and was quite impressed with both the layout as well as the content. It was easy to read, the articles were well done, and they all had good information valuable to all NARFE members. I'd also received the Maryland Newsletter a month ago and it too was very well done. I plan to use what I can from all publications received to continue to improve what I'm doing as president of the VFC. I'm asking them to send it to me as follows: William F. {Bill} Martin, 294 Tyler Point Lane, Bumpass VA 23024-4633.

*William F. {Bill} Martin,*  
[narfe2065@hughes.net](mailto:narfe2065@hughes.net)

❖ Pain and suffering are inevitable, but misery is optional.

## **R. DAVID SMITH, IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT**

As you may know, Dave Smith resigned as VFC President last September due to cancer. There's no way to say how much we miss him, nor how sincere our hopes and prayers are for him and his wonderful wife Norma. Following is a message we received from Norma giving an update on Dave. Norma gave permission to include this in the VFC notes. Amy and Rob, who are mentioned in the note, are their son and daughter. By the way, in case you didn't know, I'm sure the "taxes" mentioned in the note were so important to Dave for his career was with the IRS. You can write to Dave & Norma at 13921 Krim Point Trail, Midlothian VA 23114-5531. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers

*. Bill Martin*

*Dear NARFE Friends,*

*This is a message to update you on what is going on with Dave at this time. Following the recent setbacks he has experienced and after talking to his doctor we have decided to enroll him early in Hospice in order to benefit from their many services. Dave and I along with Rob and Amy met with Hospice last Friday and were impressed with the many services they offer. Today we met with the nurse assigned to his care and she is a wonderful, caring person with much expertise. She will be following him weekly in conjunction with his oncologist.*

*The Hospice group has connected us to a group called Senior Solutions that will be giving us some help in our home as we need assistance and to give me some relief.*

*At this time Dave is up and around, eating well, and goes with me on short errands. Some days are better than others and we concentrate on the good days. The radiation is complete and we are hoping for some good days.*

*Again thank you for all the cards and notes that you continue to send.*

*On a lighter note he has completed his federal and state taxes and mailed them in. It was a personal goal. Fortunately he had done the medical part in December during some better days. Amy did proof them for math etc but everything was in order.*

*NARFE has been so supportive of our family during this difficult time. We feel as tho we have a big extended family out there. We ask that you continue to keep us in your prayers and we will still welcome a miracle.*

*Fondly, Norma Smith*

### **1ST VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Count down until the 2009 VFC Convention at the Hyatt Regency Reston as begun!

The committee is hard at work and hopefully the chapters are also. Bulletin #2 was mailed out to all chapter presidents and secretaries in January. The Bulletin contained all the forms for registration (including banquet), ads both chapter and patron, and supporters. The nominating committee has completed the slate of officers. The slate is: William F. Martin, President; Carolyn Wilson, 1<sup>st</sup> VP; Richard Giangerelli, 2<sup>nd</sup> VP; Robert Miller, Secretary; and Darlene Myer-Rhodes, Treasurer. The agenda for the convention is nearly complete except for the guest speakers. Senator Mark Warner has been asked and conversation is going on with his office, hopefully we will be successful in having him speak. Since we are hoping for a good attendance by current Federal employees, we are going to have a speaker that will be of interest to them as well as all other attendees. If you haven't registered for the convention, please do, late registrations will be accepted but the names will not appear in the convention program book. The convention committee meets monthly and the next meeting is February 25<sup>th</sup>.

As 1<sup>st</sup> VP, I work with the Area VP's in trying to solve any problems that arise in their Chapters. Since the last VFC Notes, I have worked with three Area VP's, trying to get a slate of officers for their chapters. I am happy to say that in Area VIII, Don Shiffert and myself were able to get officers for Chapter 0090, Fredericksburg; in Area VI, Del Dyer and myself were able to get officers for Chapter 2330, Southwest Highlands; and just this week working with Area III, VP Jack McMurchy we were successful in getting officers for Chapter 1138, South of the James. Thanks to all the hard work that the Area VPs did and to all the Chapters that came through for the VFC and NARFE. I will mention that one of the things that worked for all

of these chapters was a survey sent out to each member; the response was good in all cases.

I am always available to work with any chapter that needs assistance. Currently, I am working closely with two chapters that have new presidents. It is a goal of mine to help the chapters have the best chapter possible and if it requires giving them special attention, I am more than willing to do that. Again, this is with the help of the Area VP's.

Due to a death in the family, I was not able to attend all the Chapter Christmas Luncheons I was invited to, thanks to Area VP's presidents that filled in for me. I did attend Chapter 1549, Warrenton/Fauquier and Chapter 0028, Petersburg and swore in the officers for the coming year. I also attended the Christmas Luncheon at Chapter 1510, Imperial Plaza. I always look forward to visiting the Chapters and greeting both old and new members.

I attended the VFC Board Meeting January 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>.

Everyone please keep Dave, Norma and their family in your thoughts and prayers.

**CAROLYN WILSON, 1st VP, VFC**  
*[narfe1472@comcast.net](mailto:narfe1472@comcast.net)*

### **VFC 2<sup>nd</sup> VP REPORT**

As the VFC 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, I am responsible for assisting the appointed Chairmen on the VFC Board and coordinating their activities. These appointed Chairmen include the National Legislative Chairman, the State Legislative Chairman, the Membership Chairman, the Service Officer, the Alzheimer's Chairman, the Public Relations Chairman, and the Web Master. Luckily, each of these people is so good in their positions that they make my job much easier. Each of these Chairmen has prepared the reports, which follow, relative to their specific responsibilities and activities.

I have been quite busy with work associated with the 2009 NARFE VFC Convention. I am the database manager for the Convention and receive all of your registration forms, Convention Supporter forms, and advertisements with their associated checks, as well as information on exhibitors and their checks. Please keep these forms and checks coming. I will expend whatever effort is needed

to keep the records of this information and process the information to the various Convention Chairmen. So, keep me busy! We want the 2009 NARFE VFC Convention to be memorable and useful!

I am also the VFC representative on the Northern Virginia Aging Network (NVAN). This group includes representatives of all of the Northern Virginia County governments and many senior organizations in Northern Virginia. The VFC is working closely with this group to have a stronger voice on issues relative to seniors before the Commonwealth of Virginia Legislature. In November 2008, this group conducted a workshop in Fairfax County on how to reinvent you home, using universal design approaches, to allow older and/or disabled people to stay in their homes and not be required to move to assisted living communities or nursing homes. A workshop for architects and contractors to show how universal design concepts could be easily and inexpensively incorporated in existing and new construction was also held. The sub-group formed under NVAN that actually organized and conducted these workshops, is the Building For All Committee (BFAC), which I am also a member of. The BFAC is growing in importance and you will hear more about them in the future.

I have also been asked to attend board meetings of the local AARP Chapter. In September 2008 they held their first antique auto show in Herndon, Virginia. The proceeds from this auto show were used to fund scholarships for medical students and personnel in geriatric care at George Mason University. The next antique auto show organized by this AARP Chapter will be held in Herndon, Virginia, in September 2009 and the proceeds will be used to fund more geriatric scholarships at George Mason University. I will represent the VFC in the organization of this 2009 Antique Auto Show and call on all of you to provide any assistance you can.

I have also been elected President of the NARFE Dulles Chapter 1241. That has been keeping me pretty busy as well. Soon you will see an expanded and improved NARFE Dulles Chapter 1241 web page on the VFC website.

***Richard J. Giangerelli***

❖ He who seeks advice seldom errs.

### **TREASURER'S NOTES**

Early in February an invoice was mailed to each chapter treasurer requesting their VFC dues be paid by May 31, 2009. These dues were calculated based on number and category of voting members reported in the January 8, 2009 National M110 report and October 8, 2008 National M114 Report. We thank those chapters that have already paid their dues in advance of the May 31 deadline. As in past years, we want another 100% response rate this year.

We encourage your chapter members to support the 2009 Convention, May 1 to May 3, 2009 in Reston with their attendance, by placing patron ads in the program book and as a convention supporter. See you at the convention!

It is a pleasure to serve the VFC Board and our chapters. Thank you for your support.

*Darlene Myer Rhodes, VFC Treasurer.*

### **NATIONAL LEGISLATION**

Things seem to be stirring on Capitol Hill for some of NARFE's legislative program. National's Feb. 13 Hotline reported that under the economic stimulus package, some retirees affected by the Government Pension Offset or Windfall Elimination Provision may be able to take a \$250 per-person tax credit, but details are missing, and Senate action on the final bill was not complete when the Hotline was released. Presumably that would be effective for 2009 taxes paid in 2010. Meanwhile, a stand-alone House bill to repeal the GPO and WEP has been re-introduced by Rep. Howard Berman (D-CA), and word was that Senator Diane Feinstein would re-introduce it in the Senate soon. National also expects that Premium Conversion will be re-introduced in both houses during the week of February 23, sponsored in this Congress by Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) in the House, and our own Senator Jim Webb on the Senate side.

Also, D.C. voting rights for the House has been introduced in both the House and Senate, by Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) and Sen. Joseph Lieberman (I-CT). So far those bills haven't gained much traction, and opponents will raise constitutional objections on

the grounds that the District is not a State. And three benefit enhancements for current FERS federal employees have been introduced. In the House, Rep. Jim Moran (D-8<sup>th</sup>) has originated bills which would (1) credit accumulated sick leave time toward retirement; and (2) allow for recapture of service credit when federal service is interrupted by a period of outside employment. Both of those measures would bring FERS retirement closer to CSRS retirement rules. In the Senate, Senator Jim Webb has also introduced a fed-friendly bill which would (3) provide up to 4 weeks of paid parental leave (within the 12 weeks unpaid leave already allowed) on the birth or adoption of a child.

Finally, National has sent me a list of 35 Virginians who registered for the upcoming Legislative Training Conference to be held March 7-10. That's not quite so many as the 40+ who attended the 2007 Conference, but still a respectable showing.

*Charles Delaplane*

### **STATE LEGISLATION UPDATE**

The State Legislation VFC web site has been updated with the addition of several items. You can find training manuals for state legislation chairs, as well as training materials to aid your chapter officers. We have contracted with the Eldon James Company to provide a special, easy to use, web site to track the operations of the Virginia General Assembly 2009 session. You will be able to easily follow those bills that directly affect seniors on this web site. Also there is a link to "The Geison Perspective" which is a weekly column written by an ex member of the General Assembly who can provide a personal viewpoint on why things happen in Richmond politics. As an added service to chapter members who are on the VFC e-mail list; the SL chair has tried to issue timely e-mails singling out bills and issues of interest that are being considered in the General Assembly

The General Assembly 2009 session began on January 14<sup>th</sup> with some changes. In an effort to reduce the workload during the short session; the members of the House of Delegates agreed in the 2008 session to limit to 15, the number of bills that a single member could introduce. The efforts of the VFC and other organizations have finally convinced the House of Delegates to alter the rules

to put subcommittee votes on the web site to reveal just how members voted when processing a bill.

Our hope to provide persons with private 401-k accounts, the same legal protections that TSP accounts, Federal Retiree pensions and SS payments have, were dashed when Delegate Lingamfelter's bill HB1559, continued from the 2008 session, was defeated in committee on DEC 4, and no new bills on the subject were introduced this session.

Our support of actions to increase the level of the Aging in Place tax credit for visitability and accessibility building modifications has resulted in three bills being introduced. Two bills were introduced in the Senate by Senators Whipple and Puller and one in the House by Delegate Peace.

The issue most affecting chapter members this session is the budget amendment that will be required to cover the shortfall in the current budget. Due to a souring economy and the optimistic projections in the 2008 session by the members of the General assembly and the Governor, the state is seeking ways to cut between \$3 and \$4 billion dollars from the budget.

Chapter leaders wishing to do more at the chapter level with State Legislation issues now have the resources on the VFC web site to get training and handouts to assist in training their officers.

Our efforts to raise funds for the VFC Political Fund have been less than successful. The current fund is only about \$5,000 which is far short of the goal of \$12,000. This will place the VFC in a poor position to support friendly legislators in the 2009 election of the House of Delegate members. This will be a hard fought election as the new composition of the House of Delegates will determine the nature of the redistricting process in 2011. All AVP's and Chapter Presidents are encouraged to seek donations from their chapter members.

*William A. Schmidt*

### **NARFE MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

In November I visited Chapter 737 where I spoke regarding membership and retention. In

December I attended a joint Holiday Luncheon of Chapters 7 and 1665.

Each month I do the following reports and send them out to the Board including all of the Area Vice Presidents. The reports are: M112S – Chapter Activity Summary – Monthly, M112 changes for the Chapter Activity Report, M110 Membership Summary – Monthly VFC Membership Charts.

Congratulations on our newest Chapter 2358 out of Area 7. We are starting off this year with 135 new members - that is good. Congratulations to Chapter 737 with 16 of them. We have 411 second notices. It is not too late for these 411. We need to write letters, or call them. Don't lose these members. Do it today!. If you need help on what to do, I will be glad to help you. Call or email me.

In January I was present and attended all meetings for the VFC Board from 25 through 27 January. When I gave my report I announced I would be contacting all of the area VP's to get some information from them to work on Membership. I have started with area 1. I have notified Sharon Rose to send me each of the membership chairman's names in her area and their email addresses. I have also asked her if she has some who do not have email addresses then I am requesting an address or phone number. As I get the membership chairman's name from area I will be sending out an email asking them to work with me. I want to find out what they think is the problem with retention. I want to find out if they are using the wonderful letters we have to get some of these members back and if they don't have them will work with them getting the letters out. We need to make NARFE a household name like AARP is and we have to get the word out how important NARFE is and how important the work they do is. This is the word I want to get out to all of the Membership Chairmen in each of the Chapters, as well as anyone who is recruiting members.

*Shirley Keyes*

## **2009 VFC CONVENTION REPORT**

We have a wonderful committee – they are working very hard right now to ensure that the state convention for this year turns out to be one that everyone will enjoy as well as remember. By

now each chapter should have received in the mail the package that contains information regarding the 2009 Virginia Federation of Chapters (VFC) Convention which will be held on May 1-3, 2009 in Reston, Virginia. If your chapter did not receive a package, please let our Convention Coordinator, Carolyn Wilson know by email at [narfe1472@comcast.net](mailto:narfe1472@comcast.net).

We selected the first weekend in May as our convention dates to provide the opportunity for active federal employees and retired federal employees, who may be working, to attend. We are planning a full agenda to appeal to both active and retired federal employees and their spouses. Some of your chapter members may not be able to attend a chapter meeting, so complete information about the 2009 VFC Convention, hotel, registration forms, etc. is on the VFC website at [www.vanarfe.org](http://www.vanarfe.org). Please encourage all your chapter members to consider attending this exciting convention.

The convention is partially funded by the ads each chapter sells. There are three types of ads: Patron, Product/Services and Chapter. All of these ads will be placed in the convention program book and Product/Services and Patron ads over \$100 will also be placed on the VFC web site. As an incentive to you and your chapter, chapters obtaining Product/Services or Patron ads totaling \$500 or more will receive a 10% rebate of total sales on those ads. It will be an easy way to earn some extra money for the Chapter. As an incentive for merchants and Patrons to purchase ads, we will post on the VFC Web Page [www.vanarfe.org](http://www.vanarfe.org) ads that cost \$100 or more – the ads will be posted until May 15, 2009. At the same time, you and your members will help build an awareness of NARFE within the local community and help the VFC in our efforts toward making NARFE a household word in Virginia. We are counting on your Chapter's full participation and support! We also need for you to place an ad for your chapter. These ads are cheaper than the others but will not count for the 10% incentive.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact Carolyn Wilson at [narfe1472@comcast.net](mailto:narfe1472@comcast.net) or Shirley Keyes at [shirleykeyes@aol.com](mailto:shirleykeyes@aol.com). We are looking forward to seeing you at the 2009 Convention!

*Shirley Keyes*

- ❖ A pessimist keeps blowing out the light to see how dark it is.

## **SERVICE REPORT**

We have ordered the latest information for **Chapter Service Officers** and **Guide** and are sending it by request. If your Chapter has recruited a new Service Officer we will send them a special packet of materials to help them understand their new position.

You can contact us by phone at 703.966.1122, email [Twobrownbears@verizon.net](mailto:Twobrownbears@verizon.net) or mail 11244 Harbor Court Reston, Va. 20191-4338

We will also have copies in our **Training Session** at the **NARFE Convention** 1-3 May, this year, in Reston, Va. plus other topics of interest will be available.

We attended the VFC Board meeting in January and handed out our presentation called **Managing Life for Your Personal Safety**.

We visited the Tuckahoe Chapter 1727 the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February and gave two presentations rolled into one called **Essential Information for Survivors** and **How Long to Keep your Important Papers**.

Sue is working on arrangements for the Banquet, Reception and Decorations for our annual convention.

We are also getting ready to transfer our responsibilities and resources to the next Service Officer(s) when they are appointed in May.

We appreciate the support and interest that have made our job so enjoyable.

*Sue and Jim Righter Co-Service Officers*

## **AREA I NOTES**

All four chapters in Area I have a full slate of officers and have submitted their F7s for the year. Chapter 682 hosted Joe Beaudoin at their holiday luncheon in December and he installed their officers. During this reporting period, I attended both chapter 1823 and Chapter 682's holiday luncheons. I attended the January Quarterly VFC Board Meeting in Louisa County. Also during January, I visited Chapter 685 and installed their officers for the year. In February I

traveled to Northern Neck to visit with chapter 1823. They hosted Charlie Delaplane at a special Sunday meeting to discuss legislative issues in the new Congress. The meeting was well advertised in three newspapers (funded through the matching funds program) and in flyers in hopes of generating interest among retirees in the community who are not NARFE members. Also in February, I, along with representatives from Area I Chapters 682, 685 and 1823, visited HQ NARFE in Alexandria for orientation and discussion. Margaret Baptiste and her staff were very cordial and informative. In November, Marie Collins participated in six Health Fairs and I manned a table at the Veterans Administration's Health Fair in Hampton.

*Sharon H. Rose Area I VP*

## **AREA II REPORT**

There are five distinct and individual Chapters located in Virginia Beach, Norfolk and Eastern Shore. Each chapter is diverse and unique to the area. Of the five chapters in Area II two of them have a new President. I am sure the new Presidents will develop the character of their Chapter.

All Chapters in Area II are to be commended for the good work they did in holding on to their current members and for recruiting new members. However, hopefully we can do a lot better in some chapters for the remainder of the year.

In our favor during these stressed economic times, the chapters continue publishing a quarterly newsletter that informs members of items of importance regarding legislation, chapter activities, meetings dates and speakers.

**Metro Chapter 5** chapter programs are excellent focusing on speakers with subjects to enhance recruitment and meeting attendance. As a result of these programs the meeting attendance has doubled. Under the leadership and hard work of Past President Lynne Pipis this was possible. **Tidewater Chapter 66** chapter meetings are well attended. President Merritt is to be commended for the good work in maintaining their current members and for recruiting new members. **Virginia Beach Chapter 974** has a new President Alex Adkins. Alex immediately made all his appointment and

is focusing on chapter growth and better attendance at chapter meetings. The chapter spearheaded a forum for candidates running for Mayor of Virginia Beach. **Eastern Shore Chapter 1175** President Richard C. Turner agreed to stay around for another year. Richard is looking for more chapter growth and is trying to increase meeting attendance. This chapter meets only twice a year. Starting 2009, they will meet three times a year. **Seaside Chapter 1827** Ron Butler another President who agreed to stay around for another year. Ron is working hard trying to recruit new members and trying to get more of his members to attend Chapter meetings. The members participated in the Public Broadcasting Radio Membership Drive. Their participation exposed NARFE and their presence was announced during the broadcast. This was a great opportunity for Area II members to promote NARFE.

The chapters are in the process of getting delegates to the VFC convention. All chapters will be represented by delegate or proxy. Hope they have an exciting and interesting trip. Last, but not least I am indeed grateful to our members who made the sacrifice to volunteer their time.

*Betty L. Warren Area II VP*

### **AREA III ACTIVITIES**

The winter season was active for the seven chapters with a variety of programs, election of officers, Christmas parties and installation of officers and continuing "regular" activities. Publication of the area newsletter continued with the Jan-Feb issue filled with officer installation and Christmas party pictures and the Mar-Apr issue scheduled for publication Mar 1<sup>st</sup>. Our Public Relations Coordinator Larry Garelick (Richmond chapter), chapter editors, and other coordinators continued to write informative articles.

On Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>, Roy Beasley and Veronica Fountain (Petersburg) handed out magazines and applications at the Fort Lee Health Fair. On the 13<sup>th</sup>, Carey Brown and myself from the Petersburg chapter, and Pat Hoffert and Marge Bartell from the Midlothian chapter, provided membership kits and information from a NARFE table at the Central Virginia TRIAD meeting in Petersburg. A lot of interest was generated each day, but we are not aware of many new members joining. By

year's end, both Colonial Heights and Imperial Plaza had gained the largest percentage of members while Midlothian and South of the James also gained. Petersburg gained members near the end of the year making their overall losses about 3% while the Richmond and Tuckahoe chapters lost the highest percentages.

Speakers varied from providing information on the history of Petersburg & slide show (Petersburg) and the Holocaust Museum (Midlothian) to crime directed against seniors (Petersburg and Richmond) to law Judge Hudson (of the Vick dog fighting trial fame)(Midlothian). Carroll Graham spoke to Richmond on the State Legislative Plan; Joe Beaudoin, NARFE VP discussed implications of the economy and political party/administration changes on our entitlements (Tuckahoe). VFC Service Officers (Sue & Jim Righter) discussed simplified record keeping and the importance of a survivor kit (Tuckahoe). Also VFC 1<sup>st</sup> VP Carolyn Wilson described managing your own safety (South of the James) using service officer materials and Sam Harris – ( treasurer) provided basic computer training to Tuckahoe members. Colonial Heights held an Alzheimer's auction.

During the period, I conducted two Area meetings for presidents and coordinators. The November meeting featured planning for chapter elections and training service officers with service officers as guests. Vice presidents were guests at the February meeting which featured meeting the new presidents and planning for the VFC convention. Ms. Wilson, VFC 1<sup>st</sup> VP attended and spoke at both meetings.

All chapters held elections and now have presidents. All F-7s were turned in on time although some chapters are still filling positions. New presidents will lead South of the James (Joyce Thomas), Colonial Heights (Mary Lykins), and Midlothian (Marv Wecker). Thanks to former presidents Don Holman (South of the James), James Barr (Colonial Heights), and Pat Hoffert (Midlothian).

It took effort and time to get the South of the James president elected by VFC VP Carolyn Wilson and myself. We attended 4 chapter meetings, and Ms. Wilson developed a survey which was sent to all members. The results were positive, several members will serve on

committees, and a member volunteered to be president. Officers were installed at the February meeting. Ms. Wilson and I will continue to help.

The December meetings were enjoyable. I attended meetings at Tuckahoe, Richmond, Imperial Plaza, and Colonial Heights and installed officers. Ms. Wilson installed the Petersburg officers of my home chapter and attended the South of the James Christmas Party. The Midlothian officers were installed by former Area 3 VP Bob Boyd.

*Jack W. McMurchy, Area III VP*

### **AREA IV REPORT**

Greetings and best wishes to all members of NARFE, VFC, Area IV. The nice temperate conditions we are experiencing cause Norma and I to ponder if we are back on in the tropics. Just wishful thinking and recalling times gone by. Pleased to report all Chapters in Area IV submitted their F7 Reports on time. Please assure if changes take place that a follow-up report is submitted to maintain proper records. Norma and I plan to attend the VFC Convention at Reston, VA, Hyatt Regency Hotel, May 1-3, 2009. Bulletins 1 and 2 have been sent to Chapter Presidents and Secretaries. I encourage each member to plan to attend if their situation allows.

If for some reason your chapter does not have a member attending the Convention, please use the proxy forms and select a member attending to represent your chapter. This is essential to conduct business in a proper manner at the Convention. Look forward to seeing you there and meeting new people to enjoy the happenings at the Convention.

I am saddened to report the loss of 17 deceased members from Churchland Chapter 1293 January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008 - which included 12 Honorary and 5 regular members.

*Joseph D. Lee, Area IV V. Pres.*

### **AREA V VICE PRESIDENT**

Area V has the following chapters: Lynchburg 110, Danville 1011, Bedford 1068, Martinsville-Henry 1882, Southside 2079, Piedmont 2080. The total membership for Area V is approximately 472, which makes it the smallest area within the VFC. In spite of this, membership can still be described as "good." Needless to say

any gains/losses in membership greatly impact our numbers. I was thrilled to participate in the installation of officers for Chapter 1882 wherein the local newspaper (Martinsville Bulletin) published a great article and photo of the newly elected officers. The article mentioned the origin and mission of NARFE. It also stated when/where Chapter 1882 meets.

I'm convinced that the world is turning because it's February already. My priorities for 2009 all lead right back to recruitment and retention. Membership is declining, and we must do everything that we can to slow, stop, and/or reverse this trend. I have embarked upon a mission that took me back to my former employer (Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC) where I have connected with former co-workers in order to provide NARFE information to active employees. This is an "exploratory" task which I hope will help create a permanent line of communication with employee groups within the Department of Transportation. Whatever we do to support NARFE requires a commitment to ensure that it remains a viable organization.

*Jessie Barksdale, Area V VP,  
jbarksdale@myway.com*

### **AREA VI VICE PRESIDENTS REPORT**

All Chapters in Area VI now have Presidents. Chapters 111, 1134 and 1837 continue with their last years Presidents.

Chapter 2330 has found a President in the person of Linda Booth of Castlewood Virginia. As I reported in the last newsletter Chapter 2330 had surveyed their members over the past summer. The report-out meeting in November, Carolyn Wilson attending, had a very good turnout and a great discussion. The Chapter decided to try quarterly meetings to be held in various locations around the Chapter assigned area. They also hope to focus efforts on recruitment at one of two community-wide events in Abingdon this spring. Past President Joe Chase will head up a Membership Committee composed of some past active members and some new comers.

Chapter 111, Roanoke is still moving their monthly meetings around the Valley in an

effort to find a site with good handicap access (and good food) for their noon meetings.

We continue to encourage dues withholding for all our members as a great way to assure retention.

We are encouraging each Chapter to support the VFC/NARFE Convention in Reston this spring. It's a long way from Bristol to Fairfax.

*Del Dyer, Area Vice President*

### **AREA VII NOTE**

We applaud Harold H. Bush, an honorary member of Harrisonburg Chapter 164, for reaching his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Harold remains active as evidenced by his "Letter to the Editor" appearing in the local newspaper on his birthday and the fact that his driver's license has been extended for 8 more years.

We welcome the newly chartered Shenandoah County Chapter 2358 in Area VII. Although some members may have been drawn from nearby chapters, we expect the overall number of memberships to increase due to the presence of potential members in the logistical support area.

Regarding dues withholding, all Area VII chapters are zeroing in on ways to get as many members as possible to use dues withholding. A recent VFC study shows Area VII with the highest percentage of members using the process. Unfortunately, the current percentage is less than 20 percent which shows there is room for considerable improvement.

Bill Martin, VFC President, installed the new officers and committee chairs of the Harrisonburg Chapter 164 and I conducted a similar installation for the Staunton-Augusta County-Waynesboro Chapter 178. All Area VII chapters have the requisite set of officers and committee chairs.

Page Valley continues to lead the way in consistently contacting local, state and national elected officials on matters of concern to NARFE. The letters and email messages are followed up with face-to-face meetings, when appropriate.

Staunton-Augusta County-Waynesboro Chapter 178 and Page Valley Chapter 1793 elected new Presidents in December. I congratulate the new officers and committee chairs for their

willingness to assume positions of responsibility and I look forward to working with them. All chapters are to be commended for a successful 2008 year when membership levels were sustained.

*Luther L. Santiful, Area VII VP*

### **AREA XIII**

Area 8 chapters are doing well. All 7 chapters have a full slate of officers. 5 chapters have a new President. 1 chapter elected all new officers. All 7 chapters have a monthly newsletter. 5 of the chapters have a lunch meeting, 1 chapter meets in the afternoon, and 1 chapter meets in the evening. All have good programs with speakers. In spite of all this good news, most Area 8 chapters have problems getting attendance at chapter meetings, and retaining chapter members. Retaining members has to be a main program for each chapter. The chapter membership chair and the chapter public relations chair must work together on this. Every time there is a second notice on the monthly M112 report a phone call should be made to that member to remind them to renew their membership. Same when there is a "dropped for non payment of dues" on the M112. A phone call should be made to that person encouraging them to renew their membership. Public relations can be a notice in the local newspaper about the upcoming chapter meeting. If there is a PSA (Public Service Announcements channel on your local TV station, get an ad on it about your chapter. Newsletters should have an article on how to join your chapter, and members can use this to recruit new members. NARFE may go under 300,000 members in the near future. That means we may not be a big player anymore on capital hill. Former VFC President Ann Collins had a saying, "let's make NARFE a household name". We all need to work to accomplish that.

*Donald H. Shiffert, Area VIII VP*

### **AREA IX REPORT**

I was happy to have the opportunity to install officers in three of Area 9's six Chapters. Thanks to NARFE Vice President, Joe Beaudoin and VFC Secretary, Bob Miller, we installed the officers in all six chapters. Also I enjoyed very

much the Luncheons with four chapters. Five of the Area 9's six Chapters have new Presidents and I believe the Area will have a better year this year.

The Northern Virginia Caucus meetings provided Chapter presidents and other key officers in Area 9 and Area 10 an opportunity to exchange chapter information and address Areas and/or Chapter issues. Caucus Chair, Shirley Keyes has been doing an excellent job in leading the planning committee for the 2009 VFC Convention in Reston, VA.

The Alexandria Chapter is again participating in the George Washington Birthday Parade in the City of Alexandria. and the Woodbridge chapter will participate in the Woodbridge Parade.

Overall it has been a good year, but I believe we can do better next year. I have again enjoyed being Area IX Vice President.

*William Masterson*

### **AREA X REPORT**

In January, I attended the VFC Board Meeting in Gordonsville, VA, which is in Louisa County, about 30 miles from Charlottesville.

Since our last report, I visited Fairfax Chapter 737 and installed the officers for Arlington Chapter 7. I attended a holiday luncheon with Arlington Chapter 7 and Metro Virginia 1665 at a Culinary School in December hosted by Chapter 7. Most chapters in Area X provide a newsletter. Three chapters in Area X have their newsletter on the VFC website. Most of the newsletters had a big push to get members to attend the VFC State Convention and we expect a large number of attendees from Area X because of our proximity to Reston.

According to chapter by-laws, elections were held in November or December and new officers were installed in December or January. There are two new presidents in Area X: Bill Shackelford is the new president of Chapter 737 and Dick Giangerelli is the new president of Chapter 1241, in addition to his duties as VFC 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president. Returning as presidents in Area X are Bonnie Franklin, Chapter 7 (Arlington), Rich Raybold, Chapter 489 (McLean-Great Falls), Kathy Arpa, Chapter 1116 (Vienna-Oakton), Matt Prisutti, Chapter 1133 (Loudoun), and Judy Willis

and Jeanette Pelton, co-presidents of Chapter 1665 (Metro Northern Virginia).

To continue my goal of more communication within Area X, I notified the chapter presidents about an article in the Federal Diary column of the Washington Post on February 4 about NARFE. This article is an excellent recruiting tool if attached to a membership application as it covers most of NARFE's legislative priorities. Three chapters reported they expect to send members to the National Legislative Training which will be held March 7-10 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Crystal City.

Chapters continue to schedule interesting programs to attract members. Chapters had local politicians, authors and programs providing financial, fitness and historical information. One chapter had a program on self defense and a travel agent. One chapter had the manager of the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project. One chapter had a member who had escaped from Russia and she told her story of survival. Chapters have various ways to raise money for Alzheimer's. Some chapters have silent auctions. Some chapters have white elephant sales. Others have a 50/50 drawing each month. One chapter had an auction of new and used items. Chapters in Area X are taking advantage of the fact that Joe Beaudoin is now the National Vice President. He has been invited as a guest speaker to several chapters and installed the officers at Chapter 1241 (Dulles).



In recognition of their more than 20 years of volunteer service each to the chapter, I presented awards to five chapter members in Chapter 1116. Left to right, Pat Goben, Adrian Van Huizen, Oakley Austin, Bob Carrick and Gayle Reed. The awards were signed by

Margaret L. Baptiste, National President, and William F. Martin, the VFC President.

Bill Masterson, Area IX VP, and I will attend a meeting in Congressman Gerry Connelly's office on February 20 with Mary Lou Vroman from Annandale Chapter 1159. She is the new Congressional District Liaison.

Several chapters in Area X have representatives on the VFC Convention Committee and we are working closely with Chapters in Area IX on the final stages of preparation for the 2009 VFC Convention, which will be held May 1-3 in Reston, Virginia. We are working hard to sell commercial ads totaling \$500 or more to receive a 10% rebate of the total sold.

*Kathy Arpa, Area X VP*

### **ALZHEIMER'S REPORT**

With sadness, I would like to report that, because of personal reasons and overabundance of demands on her time, Barbara McDiarmid resigned as the Virginia Federation of Chapters (VFC) Alzheimer's Chair effective mid-January 2009. We are currently searching for a replacement for Barbara, someone to publicize the needs of and to encourage the funding for Alzheimer's Research as Wilton Ward did for a number of years. It is a big job; but it is also a very rewarding job.

In the meantime, and until the VFC can find a person to fill this Chair position, I have stepped in as the Acting Alzheimer's Chair. So, until further notice, please forward your Alzheimer's Research contributions to me at the following address:

Richard J. Giangerelli  
2710 Viking Drive  
Herndon, VA 20171-2400

And please remember to ensure that the checks are made out to "NARFE – Alzheimer's Research" and that the Chapter number is indicated in the notes line on the checks. Checks may also be sent directly to the Alzheimer's Association in Chicago by individuals; but the Chapter number is still required on the check so that the proper Chapter gets credit for the contribution. Record keeping is much easier, however, if the checks are sent to the VFC Alzheimer's Chair, temporarily me.

I have prepared a new computer-based record-keeping database for Alzheimer's

contributions from the VFC Chapters and am currently working my way back through the contribution records for 2008, while maintaining the contribution records for 2009. This effort is taking some time; but I believe it will prove extremely useful.

Also, I have just received an unofficial report from the NARFE Alzheimer's Chair on the monetary contributions of NARFE members and Chapters for the period July 1, 2008 thru December 31, 2008, which, as a result of the reporting procedures used, is really the period June 1, 2008 thru November 30, 2008. This report indicates that for the reporting period, NARFE members and Chapters contributed \$209,291 for Alzheimer's Research. NARFE Region X, which includes Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia, was the largest contributor with \$67,959. And the NARFE members and Chapters in Virginia were the largest contributors among all 52 States with \$26,204. Again, these numbers do not really include the month of December 2008, which is typically the time of the most contributions. So the special events held by the various VFC Chapters, such as the fashion show at the Woodbridge Chapter, the silent auction at the Metro Northern Virginia Chapter, and the plant sale at the Dulles Chapter, among others, to collect contributions for Alzheimer's Research, are not included in this amount.

Virginia NARFE members and Chapters keep up you fantastic efforts. I am more than willing to spend the time needed to record your efforts and process your Alzheimer's Research contribution checks.

*Richard J. Giangerelli*

### **VOLUNTEERING IS NARFE**

Whenever I sit down to write a column about NARFE, the usual tendency is to jump into crucial issues such as membership, recruitment, retention, legislation and a myriad of other concerns that affect the life of our organization. I think it is time to look at another aspect of what we do as part of the NARFE community that transcends our organizational concerns and provides a wonderfully positive aspect for our

lives as retirees and members of the greater community.

Volunteering is an integral part of our being retirees. I did not realize how extensive this was until I served as project manager for an economic analysis that was commissioned by the 4<sup>th</sup> Branch, a North Carolina watch-dog organization, to provide the evidence necessary to extent the Bailey Settlement that many retired federal, state, and military retirees enjoy. The Bailey Settlement exempted a limited number of federal, state, local and military retirees residing in North Carolina from paying state income tax on their retirement annuities. As an integral part of the analysis, a detailed survey was mailed out to approximately 9,400 randomly selected recipients that included a significant number of federal retirees. A section of the survey requested the respondents to provide an extensive listing of their volunteer work for organizations plus special skills that they might bring to their community.

The volunteer activities reported by the respondents ranged across many organizations, including government/civic organizations, hospitals, community clubs, religious organizations, schools, and others. About two thirds of the respondents contributed volunteer and/or skills to their communities that averaged about four activities for each contributing member. When summed up, this amounted to thousands of hours of annual community service and hundreds of thousands of dollars in cost savings to the organizations.

If one were to access the amount of voluntary contributions in terms of hours and dollars across our five-state region, the result would be significant if not staggering. It is easy to see why many service organizations depend upon retirees to provide the skills needed to succeed. This is especially true right now what with the deepening recession when many organizations would otherwise be forced to slash budgets and reduce or eliminate services. We retirees are making a difference at a very crucial time. Hooray for us! Keep up the good volunteer work.

*Paul Carew, Region X Vice President*

- ❖ Wear a smile and have friends.
- Wear a frown and have wrinkles.

**TALKING POINTS**  
**2009 VFC STATE LEGISLATIVE PLAN**  
**PRO TEM**

**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, except from the IRS. Once one retires and moves ones TSP funds into a 401k plan, this protection vanishes. For FERS employees this represents 1/3 of their retirement that could be subject to seizure. For non federal retirees the future of retirement will be based on various forms of investment vehicles. To protect the future retirement income of all residents there needs to be some protection of retirement vehicles. Two bills were introduced in the 2008 legislative session. One, HB1256, would protect up to \$750,000 and was left in committee, the other HB1559, would protect the full amount of an IRA and was continued until the 2009 session.

**Encourage VDOT to alter transportation policies to accommodate the needs of the rapidly increasing senior 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. While our society has been designed around the use of private automobiles for decades, the state is projecting a significant increase in the population of citizens aged 80 and more. As members of the community age their ability to use a private auto is compromised, and they find themselves trapped in their own homes with inadequate access to medical services and the normal amenities of life. In much of the state no alternate form of transportation is available. Public transportation to meet the

needs of seniors should be developed and made available in more 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. Projections by the State Council on Higher Education indicate that by 2020 the state will need about 69,000 registered nurses, but will have only available 47,000, making trained certified workers hard to find. This will also make the Implementation and enforcement of a maximum caregiver to patient ratio in nursing homes, extremely difficult.

Require nursing homes to provide more options to patients for obtaining prescriptions and other needed drugs and medicines. Most nursing homes use an in house pharmacy which often makes using FEHBP pharmacy options difficult if possible at all.

Evidence has shown that there is a significant amount of elder abuse both in home care and in nursing homes. The State needs to implement more programs to secure and encourage the utilization of volunteer ombudsmen for patients.

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. Just as pediatric doctors are trained to deal with issues in a manner appropriate to children, the medical profession has found that Geriatric training is needed to properly deal with the special ways that elderly patients respond to treatment

**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 visitability as defined in Virginia code 58.1-339.7.**

Current law covers benefits for new construction, and for retrofitting older dwellings

with features that make access and livability to dwellings by the disabled possible, 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. This program is primarily designed to provide assistance to disabled persons who use wheelchairs for mobility assistance. Increasing the credit to \$1,000 would better align the credit with the costs of construction.

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

For several years the Republican majority in the House of Delegates has adopted a rule that permits bills to be disposed of in subcommittee. Previously bills were discussed in subcommittee, but all bills were voted on in full committee, with the committee vote recorded and displayed on the General Assembly web site. 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. Subcommittee meetings are frequently held early in the day with little public knowledge of the agenda, and votes often have only 4 to 5 Delegates on the prevailing side. While disposing of bills in subcommittee may help in dealing with the significant workload of the members of the House of Delegates, hiding the identity of the voters is not consistent with the otherwise openness of the operation of the General Assembly.

❖ Journalism is the ability to meet the challenge of filling space. Rebecca West