



FUTURE OF NARFE COMMITTEE

NARFE was founded on February 19, 1921 by 14 civil service employees interested in forming an association dedicated to "the betterment of the status of retired federal employees". At that time the maximum pension authorized for civil service retirees was \$60 per month. Since that time, NARFE has been proud to be recognized as a "grass roots" organization reaching nearly 500,000 members in the 1980's. During our history we have made many improvements in the retirement benefits we enjoy today because of the efforts of our "grassroots", and with the recognition of "Active Federal Employees" (AFEs) which were added to our name in 2004 we have further enhanced the benefits of the FERs program, which we helped craft. The "grassroots" are the reason we have been successful in enhancing and protecting the earned benefits of retirees and survivor annuitants during the past 92 years. (Two publications have been issued by our National Office which detail our great history of legislative accomplishments, "Looking Back on 80 Years at NARFE" and "Celebrating 90 Years of Service - 1921- 2011".) The 112th Congress singled out the federal employees with pay freezes and increased contributions to their retirement fund. The 113th Congress has continued to focus on federal employees, but they are also looking at the federal retirees - all in the attempt to reduce the federal budget deficit. Today, our membership is 254,520 just about ½ of what it was just 30 years ago, yet we have a potential to reach just over 5 million in the federal community, engage them, and work together to increase our clout with Congress.

At the very time when every member should be "energized, on guard and working hard" (in the words of Steny Hoyer), to save their benefits, we note that something has happened to our "grassroots" as they are decaying and not growing. With the enhanced effort of our Legislative Staff through the "Protect America's Heartbeat" campaign, we can barely hear the heartbeat of our "grassroots", as few members even take the time to contact their Congressmen. Is this what the future of NARFE is to be? Are the strong "grassroots" who have brought us the benefits we enjoy today, just fading away?

With great concern for the future of NARFE, the National Executive Board (NEB) passed the following motion at the July NEB meeting:

**Compiled By:
Region VIII Vice President Helen Zajac**

Motion #02-07-13: SUBJECT: Future of NARFE. Motion - "that the NEB authorize the National President to appoint a committee of appropriate size to address the future of NARFE and the role of e-chapters as a dominant – and inevitable – part of this future. The committee will examine all significant issues that could affect the future growth and viability of this Association. The committee will prepare a report with recommendations to promote strengthening and assuring long-term effectiveness of NARFE for the NEB to review, and, if approved, the report will be published in time for disseminating at 2014 federation conventions and will be made available to the general membership."

The Committee has now been formed, and there are a number of thoughts which have been provided for consideration by the committee to generate discussion. The committee can and should consider all aspects of NARFE – **today and tomorrow**.

Initially NARFE accomplished everything via telephone or USPS mail. Today, more and more of NARFE's operation is accomplished over the internet – which is faster and cheaper than the previous method.

NARFE, over the years, went from one chapter to over 2360 chapters. Presently there are 1,317 chapters (a loss of over 1,000 chapters).

NARFE has gone from allowing members to join as 'national only members' to requiring them to also join a chapter (Mandatory Chapter Membership).

NARFE has recently (29 months ago) instituted electronic chapter(s) with over 15,000 members today.

NARFE went from a staff of approximately 90 employees at headquarters to our present staff of approximately 56 which includes 4 national officers.

NARFE moved their headquarters from DC to a modern building in Alexandria, Virginia.

The committee will look at our present structure to determine whether it is the structure we want to have in the future (10, 20 or 30 years from now). Will we need the 4 or 5 layers that we presently have (chapters, district vice presidents, federations, RVP's and headquarters)? Do the messages that originate at headquarters and/or the chapters get lost as they go through the layers? With the type of communication we have today and that we will have tomorrow, should headquarters deal directly with federations and/or chapters?

- Will NARFE still have traditional chapters or will they be replaced with a different type of chapter, perhaps: state chapters, or electronic chapters?
- Should we have a Chief Operating Officer at headquarters?

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- Do the national officers have to be resident officers or can they remain home and do their job?

During most of the changes that we have experienced or encountered, our actions have been reactionary instead of pro-active. We need to "***plan for the future***" and that is what the committee is being asked to do – to assist in planning the "***Future of NARFE***".

If possible, this committee will provide an interim report at the *November NEB meeting (November 19-21)*. Once the committee has finalized their recommendations/report, this information will be shared with our members at the 2014 federation conventions and through the various publications that we have available. The committee's report/recommendations will be discussed at the 2014 national convention in Orlando.

The National President has appointed the following members to serve on this committee:

FUTURE OF NARFE (FON) COMMITTEE

Evelyn Kirby

Co-Chair

Region II Regional Vice President

ekirby@atlanticbb.net

William "Bill" Shackelford

Co-Chair

Past Virginia Federation President

wshack1951@aol.com

Gerald "Jerry" Hall

California District Vice President and Chapter President

fritz1313@hotmail.com

Robert Davidson

Chapter President

oldbobnarfe@myexcel.com

Rodney Adelman

Arizona Federation President

narfeaz@cox.net

Bruce Coleman

Iowa Federation Vice President and Chapter President

bactjccoleman@msn.com

James Crawford

New Hampshire Federation Membership Chair and Chapter President

seacaptains@metrocast.net

Compiled By:

Region VIII Vice President Helen Zajac

Huelyn "Lynn" Harper

Georgia Federation Vice President and Chapter President

lynn_harper@msn.com

Marc Harris

Chapter President

marcaharris@gmail.com

Ted Jensen

Past Maryland Federation President

tjensen.narfe@gmail.com

William "Bill" Leatham

Florida Federation Vice President and Configuration Advisory Board member

wleatham@narfe.net

Clarence Robinson

Georgia Federation President

crobin8145@att.net

Active Federal Employee

To Be Named

Joseph Beaudoin

Ex Officio, National President

natpres@narfe.org

The scope and purpose of this committee is not to address changes to the Bylaws, as there is another committee already working specifically on the Bylaws. NARFE members are encouraged to provide any comments or ideas addressing the future organization and structure of NARFE and how it will operate in future decades. You may send your comments to any of the above listed committee members, and you are encouraged to do so.

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Region VIII Vice President Helen Zajac