



**HAND OUTS FOR  
DISCUSSION ON  
THE FUTURE  
OF NARFE**

These are comments from various Federations, Past Federations Officers and others. I have combined the comments to help get a perspective of what others are thinking and saying.

- ❖ No HQ staff or RVPs should travel to any fed. convention next year
- ❖ HQ staff and RVPs will be available by phone, email, text or teleconference only, unless there is some emergency. All travel will need to be approved in advance by the NARFE President
- ❖ Stop spending time and money trying to save dead or dying chapters, instead, consolidate existing zip-code based chapters over the next 6 months.
- ❖ All Federations must look serious at their budgets and stop all travel to chapters to install officers, shake hands, go to holiday parties,
- ❖ Dues must not subsidize monthly meetings that are nothing but social functions.
- ❖ The great majority of members, who do not take advantage of chapter activities, should not subsidize the few who do.
- ❖ Clarify and publicize e-NARFE as a chapter available to any member, with or without e-mail. That is the reality of e-NARFE! Or change its name.
- ❖ Members I have heard from over the past 2 years do not understand all the controversy about or the need for chapters
- ❖ When will we learn...Mandatory Chapter Membership caused a significant reduction in membership\*that continues to this day!
- ❖ Right now, e-NARFE is the only cost-effective refuge for many members, thousands of members, but it gives the false impression that it is only for folks with e-mail, which it is not
- ❖ Many chapters are chapters in name only, and many are nothing but social clubs for a small minority of members, and do nothing mission oriented.
- ❖ Some chapters have significant amounts in the bank and no plans to use the money for mission-based purposes
- ❖ HQ needs to find a way to determine the chapters that do not need the money, or are not using it for mission-based purposes, stop sending it, and use it for mission-based purposes
- ❖ Take a look at how much is spent on the annual convention, and how the money is spent. There is value in having an annual convention, but the way it is publicized it appears to be more of vacation/get-away.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS from NEB**

- A. Most prolific Federation recruiters to Federation / Regional events and conventions with NARFE subsidies
- B. More public relations
- C. Free spousal membership incentive program
- D. New category of membership "supporting member" open to all
- E. Federation Presidents contact local members of Federal Postal coalition and establish working relationship and present NARFE to their meetings/events
- F. Initiate district/area training - one day (Federation level) focus on membership and legislation and website/OAM
- G. Fresh look at our mission/vision statements
- H. Who is our customer
  - ❖ What does our customer value
  - ❖ What are our results
  - ❖ What is our plan
- I. Establish region Facebook page - HQ IT to assist
- J. Federations focus on rebuilding and strengthening chapters to focus on importance of the mission to the overall Federal community
- K. Family membership - define one plus significant other/partner
- L. National association member definition
- M. Establish Federal - Postal coalition in each Federation
- N. Distribute all press releases to Federation Presidents / Membership Chairs
- O. Monthly Go-To-Meeting calls for HQ/NEB (Membership / Legislation)
- P. RVPs Skype or Go- To-Meeting info monthly to Federation Presidents
- Q. Promotional logo items for event tables
- R. National / Unified / Single dues only
- S. Open membership to military
- T. Six-month gift plan for Federal Executive Board (Secretary And Director)

## **NARFE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES (What does it really cost?)**

August 8, 2013

To fairly gauge the cost of anything, one must consider the age-old question, "Compared to what?" So let's examine the monthly cost of NARFE membership with the discount you receive for using automated dues withholding.

This cost is \$3.54 a month or 12 cents a day. I will not bore you with what you can/cannot buy for 12 cents because the answer is basically nothing or one dime and 2 pennies.

However \$3.54 a month is about enough to buy one gallon of gasoline! On the other hand, it will pay for 34 the cost of small popcorn at the local theater and you will have to add a bit more than \$3.00 to equal the \$7.00 Senior admission to the theater. It will not quite pay for a box of "Good & Plenty Licorice Candy" at your theater; that will cost you \$4.00.

Another way of looking at this is to compare it to the costs of other clubs or associations. The annual dues at Boy Scouts of America to be a Webelo or recruit is \$50 (plus uniforms); it costs \$60 to join the Elks, \$40 to \$250 for the Shriners; \$80 a year for the Toastmasters, and a small fortune to join the Teamsters. And there must be at least one latte that you can buy for around \$4!

Bottom line: \$3.54 a month is a BARGAIN for which you receive the monthly NARFE magazine, your local monthly newsletter, and last, but not least, constant representation before the Congress and continuous surveillance over legislation that may reduce your earned retirement benefits or the salary of active employees.

The NARFE magazine provides valuable information and is a conduit to NARFE Headquarters who have the power and tools to represent you in the varied personnel benefits matters. Perhaps the most popular/useful column in the national magazine is the "question and answer" sections; one column for active employees & one for retirees.

NARFE is the only organization whose sole interest is to protect your earned retirement benefits and works closely with other groups representing active employees protecting their salary and benefits.

NEW INFORMATION: In the Christmas catalog from LL Bean, one can buy 1/20th of an ounce of maple syrup; that is 1.3 grams or about a half a drop for one days cost of NARFE membership.

BOTTOM LINE: NARFE is a bargain at only \$.12 a day!

## NARFE LOCAL CHAPTERS

### "WHO NEEDS 'EM?"

Based on a simple observation of my local chapter in, only approximately 4% - 5% of its 350 members participate in chapter activities; 95% have no interest. Furthermore, part of that participation is only passive, leaving a much smaller group of members willing to carry out the business of the chapter actively and participate as officers and appointed leaders. Although these numbers may vary among other chapters, this appears to be an endemic problem for local NARFE chapters elsewhere.

Throughout the Department of Defense (DoD), every group of any significance prepares a Mission & Functions Statement *explaining why the unit exists (mission) and how it functions to execute that mission*. The function statement for a local chapter is easy to develop, e.g. "A Secretary shall prepare and publish minutes of all meetings," "The Treasurer shall follow standard bookkeeping practices to track income and expenditures," and so on.

Searching through the possible missions that a local chapter might have, the first that stands out is "Recruitment of New Members." Given the almost total lack of available data regarding prospective new members, the recruiting mission is basically a non-starter. Getting placed on the agenda of Government agency's pre-retirement seminars is met with much difficulty. We also learned recently, as reported on the [narfe.org](http://narfe.org) website, that a resolution requiring NARFE to encourage federal agencies to include NARFE presentations in pre-retirement seminars was **voted down** at our most recent national convention which begs the question: Are the few active chapter members getting the support they need?

The second possible mission is "Membership Retention." This is critical, but with most members having only passive or no interest in local chapters, this, too appears to be a non-starter. *Thus, do local chapters have any meaningful/sustainable missions?*

Ninety years ago when our founders set up NARFE (National Association of Retired Federal Employees), they, without a doubt, used the handiest and probably *most* popular model available at that time, i.e. the traditional labor union pyramidal structure. In that period, perhaps, a strong argument could have been made to have an organization with a strong local presence and a state-level function. Today these circumstances do not prevail. There can be no argument that a NARFE

chapter has local issues to support that the national-level structure could not perform as well if not better.

Now let's look, for example, at another national organization which successfully competes for many of the same members NARFE seeks: AARP. Their model sustains only a national office with dues much less than NARFE. In this model, all of the membership dues are available to fund a national level membership lobbying effort at a significantly lower cost than the pyramidal structure of NARFE.

This AARP example is similar to the old *NARFE* "National Only" membership, which for some reason(s) was discontinued years ago. Therefore, I propose that NARFE re-establish the "National Only" membership independent of local chapters, but *also allow local chapters where there is an interest* For after all, the absolute primary mission of NARFE is to represent members' interest to the national government.

Do not read this editorial as opposing the important goals and functions of NARFE. Do consider, however, that NARFE's organizational model is not working, as it does not fit our times.

The National President has appointed the following members to serve on this committee: **FUTURE OF NARFE (FON) COMMITTEE**

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To Be Named