



REGION X REPORT
William "Bill" Shackelford
Spring 2018

I want to express my sincere thanks to all Region X members for your support during the past 3 1/2 years as your Region Vice President. Since November 2014, I have been privileged to hold the position of Region X Vice President (RVP). Serving NARFE members in our Region from Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia has been a real honor. Region X has many members and an equal number of diverse opinions. However, its collective needs and those across all of NARFE are identical.

In order to remain a viable advocacy organization, with many challenges on all levels of the organization, we must exercise appropriate advancements to make NARFE viable and stronger. All of us need to work together in order to explore all ways to secure NARFE as the voice of active Federal employees, annuitants, families and surviving spouses/partners.

During the past two years, we have been talking a lot about the future of our great Association. This conversation started at the National Convention in August, 2016 and continues with all of you here today. I don't have to tell you that NARFE is changing. NARFE HAS to change. But I assure you, our core values will not. We are poised to meet the challenges we are facing today and the ones that lie ahead. Through the implementation of the Strategic Plan, the National Executive Board has put into motion plans that will lead us towards a new NARFE. The NEB has made many decisions to insure the future of our Association. One of those decisions (and I believe the greatest decisions of ALL TIME) was the hiring of Executive Director Barb Sido. The NEB is a team that is working very well together, not always agreeing, but making hard choices that are necessary.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Our organization is experiencing a reawakening as we continue to move in a new direction. We are all in this together; anxious to move forward, but being patient to examine our options.

NARFE is a very important and successful advocate for the rights and benefits of active employees and retirees. In order to be an effective, responsive champion and the trusted voice of the civilian Federal community, NARFE must intentionally become a more fiscally healthy, more effective, and growing organization. Drastic changes are needed if NARFE is to survive in the twenty-first century and be a viable association.

Traditional methods of reaching potential members to deliver the message of the value NARFE offers are disappearing as the Federal workplace changes. Potential members are harder to reach in the

workplace as agencies no longer allow NARFE recruiters into many Federal work locations. For decades, members have been avid recruiters with much of this activity taking place within local Federal buildings. Since 9/11/2001, access to those buildings has been significantly curtailed primarily because of security concerns. Access is ultimately left to building management and the new reality is that most often NARFE access is denied.

I fully support "**NARFE Next**" Project as described in the report of ED Sido will allow NARFE to learn as much as possible about how NARFE should strive to create value for both current and future stakeholders. NARFE must be more than "all retirement, all the time".

If NARFE is going to attract more active Federal employees into the organization over the next 60 months and beyond, change in the way we do business is vital. We need to make a decisive first step with this plan so that the leaders of NARFE in the next stage can continue to build the organization.

HEALTH OF CHAPTERS AND FEDERATIONS

The health of the Federations & Chapters is a matter of major concern. The primary reason for Chapter closures are the lack of members willing to step-up and assume a leadership position. When I assumed office on November 1st, 2014 as the Regional Vice President for NARFE Region X, there were 174 chapters within the five Federations which make-up the Region - - Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia. **The total number of chapters is now 136.**

Combined with the lack of solid finances which are attributed to low levels of members, several Federations & Chapters are struggling. Nationally, there are several Federations that have an extremely low numbers of members. As of 3/31/2018:

- Less than 1,000 members = 8
- Between 1,000 & 1,500 members = 10
- Between 1,500 & 2,000 members = 6

As a result of low levels of membership, some of these Federations receive financial support from NARFE HQ. There was discussion at the recent NEB meeting that it may be necessary to develop procedures for closing/merging federations.

Everyone is aware that each Federation consists of member-oriented Chapters as well as National members. While the primary purpose of the Federation is to serve in an advisory capacity to the Chapters, the Federation must insure that all the concerns of all members, including the National members are addressed, particularly in the areas of:

- Legislative Advocacy
- Membership Recruitment and Retention
- Chapter Support, Knowledge Management and Leadership Development

In order to accomplish these efforts, Federations receive 10% funding from NARFE Headquarters and in some instance a per-capita payment from the Chapters based on the number of members within the individual Chapter. In view of the fact that Federations support both Chapter members and National members, each Federation Executive Board will need to re-examine the Federation budget in order to insure that the needs and concerns of each member is addressed. It may be necessary for each Federation to complete a re-structuring and combine or even eliminate some Board positions that are not needed to accomplish the mission of NARFE and continue to move forward. Each Federation will need strong leadership to implement bold initiatives. Change is difficult for any organization, but in NARFE's case it may be necessary to survive.

One vision to consider would be for Federations to remain intact but their role could change. Federations would only be responsible for only our core business (Legislation and Membership.) Federations could start with a dual system and phase in changes. Regions could just serve a larger membership base for our non-critical functions. Regions could provide the same services for Alzheimer's, Public Relations, Service Officer, etc. that our members are now provided by the Federations. In theory, this could cut the cost of organizational overhead considerably.

As many of you know several years back, the Future of NARFE (FON) Committee discussed the possibility of restructuring the Federations to a structure aligned along the Congressional Districts in each state. As the FON Committee evolved into the Strategic Planning Committee, this restructuring concept did not go away, it simply moved more to the "back of the book". However, this concept could be revived as a means to maintain contact with National members as the numbers increase.

A solid Congressional District Liaison/Senatorial Liaison program within each Federation could be developed by supporting a Congressional District Leaders type organization as recommended by both the Future of NARFE and Strategic Planning Committees. This effort could create one "super" Chapter for each Congressional District to be led by Congressional District Liaison in lieu of Chapter President. Federation and/or Regional efforts could lead to the following:

- Support and encourage member involvement in all NARFE legislative advocacy efforts
- Support attendance at town hall meetings and other public events having Congressional office involvement
- Support attendance at Congressional fundraisers approved by NARFE Headquarters

MEMBERSHIP

There is an ongoing concern that NARFE Headquarters (HQ) is abandoning the local "grass-roots" Chapters in favor of National membership category that was established as a result of the decision of the NEB to dissolve Chapter 2363 (E-NARFE) and the passage of the Optional Chapter Membership resolution by the delegates in attendance at the 2016 NARFE National Convention.

According to Bridget Boel, NARFE Director of Marketing and Member Resources, there has not been an effort to increase National members. Instead, there has been a considerable effort to improve the recruitment and retention of NARFE members at all levels. The nuance is really what is important. There has been considerable study/testing in order to determine the offers to which perspective members will respond. Addressing the decades-long membership crisis has been the objective of

NARFE HQ. All of your National Officers, NARFE Marketing Department and the members of the NEB, know that there is a high level of distrust in the Chapters and Federations and a perception that HQ is somehow attempting to steal members and close all local Chapters.

In order to lessen the level of distrust, it's critical to articulate the intentions. Everyone is only interested in the long term success and viability of our Association. It is a fact that there has been a field recruitment decline over the last many years. There has been both fewer recruiters and fewer recruits per recruiter. The Marketing Department has focused on providing Chapters with guidance and materials and the 2018 Operating Plan calls for a focus on Chapter development by focusing on ways to make certain that local Chapters are attractive to a new generation of potential members. Our belief is that supporting Chapters is the best way to sustain if not improve recruitment in field. In addition, new ways will be found that encourage those who have not opted for Chapter membership to recruit.

The good news is that overall our Association has been able to seriously slow the membership decline. Our greatest success will be our continued focus on creating value in the form of products, programs and services highly relevant to the Federal community. There are many new initiatives being planned. Your patience, as development continues and your continued support of NARFE is greatly appreciated.

ADVOCACY

TO BE OR NOT TO BE – A NARFE MEMBER: We all know (or should know) why we are members of NARFE.

Our Legislative Action
Programs and Camaraderie
Our Service Officer Program

We can go on and on and we each have one or more reasons for being a member.

A couple of questions we might ask ourselves are:

- 1) Why would anyone drop his/her membership?
- 2) Why wouldn't every eligible person become a member?

The reason cited by many members who do not renew their membership is that NARFE hasn't done anything for them lately. Actually, NARFE has accomplished quite a bit since 1998. Despite years of budget deficits, major natural disasters, a changing world economy, terrorist attacks at home and wars abroad, Federal Retirement Benefits have remained untouched because NARFE has acted as a deterrent against adverse proposals. NARFE is continually working for all of us. If it wasn't for NARFE, our FEHBP benefits, our COLAs and our earned annuities would most definitely have been reduced over the past years.

Does our successes over this period of time mean that we should sit back and relax?? I think that everyone would agree that the answer is NO.

The current administration, including the White House and the 115th Congress, has created a hostile environment in Washington by constantly talking about cutting the deficit without knowing if the right cuts are being made or what impact may result over the long term. Instead, Congress has decided that targeting federal employees and annuitants is in everybody's best interest. This year, the White House has kicked off a new assault. It is proposing a zero pay raise for January 2019 for civilian workers and cuts in the FERS program.

NARFE's grass roots legislative advocacy needs to be strengthened. Your earned benefits are at risk. The NARFE message to Congress couldn't be simpler: **"Don't balance the federal budget on the backs of active and retired federal workers."**

NARFE must aggressively target the protection of earned benefits and effectively market our organization. It is time to fight back. There are several ways that a NARFE member can make an impact in this fight. Visit www.narfe.org and:

- Learn the latest from Capitol Hill with NARFE's "Legislative Hotline";
- Obtain NARFE Issue Briefs and Fact Sheets;
- Participate in a Legislative Webinar;
- Learn more about NARFE Grassroots Advocacy;
- Contribute to NARFE-PAC and access NARFE-PAC.

BOTTOM LINE – – With a strong membership, our legislative clout with Congress can be effective. Our numbers count when NARFE representative visit with members of Congress.

People who join NARFE know the most effective means of change starts from within. Each NARFE member's voice and support carries twice its strength in making a difference on Capitol Hill. People who join NARFE know the only way to make change is to pursue what is right and just, so that the only result is the outcome they seek. People who join NARFE know legitimate legislative change involved time, money and dedication and the constant pursuit of what is right and just. It is with this in mind that NARFE has helped change the future for the federal community.

The next time someone asks what NARFE has done for us, ask that person:

"Are you still getting your full annuity and COLA on time? Do you still have access to the full health care coverage and employer premium sharing you had while working?" If they answer "yes" then tell them to THANK NARFE!!!!

NARFE-PAC

I want to talk a little about NARFE-PAC, NARFE's political action committee and is the only way NARFE, as an organization, can contribute to the campaigns of congressional candidates who support NARFE and our legislative agenda. Simply, NARFE-PAC exists to ensure our friends in Congress stay in Congress. As ED Sido mentioned the upcoming mid-term elections provide an excellent opportunity to build NARFE-PAC. Threats to our earned benefits continue to loom large and a strong war chest will be critical.

NARFE-PAC contributions help us build strong relationships with lawmakers; relationships that are critical to NARFE's success to preserve and protect your earned pay and benefits against unfair congressional attacks. These attacks must be stopped and it can't be done without your help. If we want to stop playing defense and start playing more offense, it's critical we have a strong and viable NARFE-PAC.

If you haven't sent in a contribution yet, I strongly urge you to do so today. The 2017-2018 Fourth Quarter totals for Region X Federations were as follows:

KENTUCKY

- Contributors = 181
- Donations = \$8,035.00
- Average Donation = \$44.39
- Sustainers = 9

NORTH CAROLINA

- Contributors = 359
- Donations = \$17,835.60
- Average Donation = \$49.68
- Sustainers = 20

TENNESSEE

- Contributors = 158
- Donations = \$6,430.00
- Average Donation = \$40.70
- Sustainers = 4

VIRGINIA

- Contributors = 853
- Donations = \$48,154.00
- Average Donation = \$56.45
- Sustainers = 40

WEST VIRGINIA

- Contributors = 102
- Donations = \$5,020.95
- Average Donation = \$49.23
- Sustainers = 8

REGION X WEBSITE / FACEBOOK

From a Region X standpoint, in order to insure that important information reaches as many NARFE members in Region X as possible, I want everyone to know that I post items of interest such as Regional Updates and NEB Meeting Summaries on the Region X website (www.narferx.org). **This report has been posted on the Region X website.**

Summaries of the two NEB meetings from October 16–17 and November 28–29, 2017 as well as a summary of the March 12–13, 2018 NEB meeting held at NARFE Headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia can be found on the Region X web page at www.narferx.org.

Additionally, I share many NARFE Daily News Clips from the NARFE Advocacy Department as possible on the NARFE Region X FaceBook page. Simply enter NARFE Region X in the FaceBook search box.

REGION X CANDIDACY

Also, please support my re-election as your Region X Vice President. You can read my campaign material at my website www.billshackelfordrvp.com

CLOSING

Thank you for taking time out of your busy lives to join your fellow NARFE members here today. I am proud of NARFE and believe that our members have the potential to make a difference in the overall growth and success of NARFE.

Thank you for your continued membership and your support and belief in NARFE. Your commitment to NARFE and its mission is crucial if we're going to succeed not only on Capitol Hill, and also as an organization. We are all in this effort together so let's move forward before it is too late. We must all work together to meet the challenges that OUR organization faces.

I look forward to discussion with you all the challenges that lie ahead, and how we're changing to meet those challenges. If you have any questions at any time, please contact me by e-mail at RVP10@narfe.org.

REMEMBER - - Together, we can move NARFE forward.