

Region VIII Report
of 2016 National Convention
Grand Sierra Resort, Reno Nevada
September 2016

National Convention:

Nearly 1,000 members attended the convention, with nearly 600 attending the Banquet, and most stayed to dance to the music of Route 66. The State Night was well attended, and with the same band, playing country music and teaching line dancing, nearly everyone stayed until the last dance. Thank you to Kathryn Vitalie, President of the Reno Chapter for the recommendation for the band.

President Richard Thissen and Secretary-Treasurer Jon Dowie were re-elected. Region VIII Vice President, Helen Zajac was also re-elected. Region VII elected Rodney Adelman by ballot, Region III elected Clarence Robinson by ballot, and Region IX elected Rich Wilson to replace retiring RVP Lanny Ross. Lanny Ross was presented with a plaque honoring his 16 years of service on the National Board.

Delegates approved a resolution to adopt an official NARFE slogan: “The E is silent, but we are not.”

Speakers:

Nevada Representative Dina Titus welcomed delegates via video and called herself “your partner in Congress”.

New Mexico Representative Michelle Lujan Grisham, serving on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee noted that we need to get Congress on the right track because we are not working in a way that makes sense for a retiree population. We need to see that their needs are being addressed. She applauded NARFE members on the important work they did as federal employees and are continuing to do on behalf of active federal employees and retirees. “There isn’t any group anywhere that deserves more gratitude.” As she exited the stage, she pledged to the Convention, “You can count on me”.

Director of Health Care and Insurance at OPM, John O’Brien spoke about the significant premium increases in the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program, and stated that none of us is happy about the increased, but OPMs first responsibility is to keep the program solvent. He stated that OPM conducted a year-long bid process to make sure it was getting the best rates possible and not only did it own review by also called in an independent actuarial firm. The increases result from the low-interest rate environment in which underwriter John Hancock Life and Health Insurance Company is not getting the return on investments it though it would get. And, after 14 years, the insurer has better information on how Federal Long Term Care Insurance Plans are being used.

Federal Retirement Benefits Expert, Tammy Flanagan, stated that while most government employees plan carefully for their retirement, they may not be quite so careful about staying up to date once they have retired. The most important thing to keep up to date after retirement is your address – notifying OPM, the Thrift Savings Plan and the Social Security Administration – is vital. Another important step is to ensure that beneficiary forms are kept up to date for the Civil Service Retirement System, Federal Employees Retirement System, the TSP and FEGLI. This should include beneficiary address updates. She is a frequent co-host of a federal benefits program on Federal News Radio, writes for NARFE magazine and Government Executive, and conducts webinars for the NARFE Federal Benefits Institute. NARFE members can view previously recorded webinars on the NARFE Website.

Legislative Director, Jessie Klement, stated that “maintaining current benefits should really be considered a victory of the Association.” She recalled NARFE’s epic budget battle in 2015, when the House-passed budget contained \$318 billion in cuts to the federal community. Ultimately, in the two-year budget agreement adopted by Congress, “Not one dollar of that \$318 billion was included.” While the two-year budget deal meant NARFE didn’t have a budget fight in 2016, NARFE’s Legislative Department has been working on four major policy issues: 1) Reform of the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP); 2) Postal Reform; 3) Medicare “hold harmless” and 4) Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program.

Federal Employee Education & Assistance Fund Executive Director, Steve Bauer, told attendees how much government service meant to him and how proud he is that he has been able to help federal workers in their time of need. He stated that more than 11,000 scholarships totaling \$15 million dollars have been awarded and some 16,00 federal employees in need have been provided with more than \$12.5 million. Ten years after its founding, FEEA forged a partnership with NARFE. Originally set up to provide natural disaster assistance⁴, a scholarship program was later added. Twenty years after beginning the partnership with NARFE, more than \$1 million has been awarded in scholarships to NARFE member’s children and grandchildren. More than \$400,000 has been distributed in disaster relief to NARFE members across the country. Bauer closed by saying, “It is with a heavy heart and with a lot of joy, but this will be my last NARFE convention as Executive Director of FEEA. It has been quite a ride and a blessing to be able to do it.” More than \$6,000 was raised for FEEA in the raffle drawing at the Convention.

Under new business, delegates voted to name the NARFE Scholarship Program in honor of Steve Bauer; the resolution cited Bauer’s efforts in guiding the establishment of an organization that provides a way for federal employees to help other federal employees.

Alzheimer’s:

Harry Johns, President and CEO of Alzheimer’s Association thanked NARFE’s leaders and members for their support of research and stated, “When the history is written about the success we ultimately have in treating and even preventing Alzheimer’s disease, NARFE ...will have been a significant part of that change.”

Merv Stuckey, Chair of the Alzheimer’s Committee reported that the current goal of \$12 is in sight, with \$11.91 million having been raised to date, and the new national goal will be \$13 million in 2018. The Alzheimer’s Committee approved four more research grants totaling more than \$470,000, which will be described in the December issue of the NARFE magazine. He recognized several Federations for their fundraising efforts: Virginia, \$63,233.98; California, \$28,337.34; Kansas, \$25,25,954.21; North Carolina, \$20,872.39 and Maryland, \$18,610.34. Federations who raised the most in terms of per capita giving are: Delaware, \$10.87; South Dakota, \$10.76; Kansas, \$8.60, North Dakota, \$7.67 and Mississippi, \$7.30.

The Alzheimer’s raffle raised \$2,681, plus \$1,708 in donations.

Recruitment:

The top recruiter for the past two years is: Margie Dennis, Region IX, Washington Chapter 32 with 99 recruits. Next was Gregory Kann, Region VII, Colorado Chapter 1085 with 98 recruits; followed by Yoggi Riley, Region VIII California Chapter 61.

Top Recruiters for California are: **Yoggi Riley**, Chapter 61, San Fernando Valley, with **71 recruits**; **Michael P. Crahan**, Chapter 65, San Francisco, with **25 recruits**; **Jerry Hall**, Chapter 65, with **23 recruits**; and **Gladyce Nelson**, Chapter 46, Sacramento, with **9 recruits**.

Top Recruiter for Hawaii are: **Marsha Wishnick**, Chapter 1802, Kailua-Kona, with **4 recruits**; **Satsuye Tanaka**, Chapter 1518, Kaimuki, with **3 recruits**; **Lucy Ige**, Chapter 1681, Kaneohe, with **3 recruits**; and **Linda Mary Kaneshiro**, Chapter 1657, Leeward Oahu, with **3 recruits**.

Top Recruiters for Nevada are: **Evelyn Hatfield**, Chapter 46, Sparks, with **3 recruits**; **Rebecca Miller**, Reno Chapter 142 Reno with **3 recruits**; **Eileen Way**, Reno Chapter 142 with **3 recruits**; and **Jane Vaughn-Meisel** Las Vegas East Chapter 2275 with **3 recruits**.

There were no new recruit in Guam or the Philippines.

Deceased:

During the Memorial Service, it was reported that a total of 15,947 members had passed away. In Region VIII, California lost 1,429 members; Guam lost 8 members; Hawaii lost 171 members; Nevada lost 86 members and the Philippines lost 50 members.

Service Officer of the year was awarded to Geneva Howe, Chapter 1583, Dallas-Ft Worth. Region VIII Service Officer of the Year is Bill Doll, Chapter 4, San Diego.

Please note that presentations from the Convention are available on the NARFE website.

Resolutions:

Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws

16-06 – **Optional Chapter Membership – Adopted** with 3,192 votes (68.78%)

At the Post Convention meeting, the NEB unanimously voted to rescind the membership incentive that had established eNARFE. (See following NARFE messages for further details)

16-24 – **One Member, One Vote – Adopted** with 3,485 votes (74.98%)

16-07 – NEB Authorized to Adjust Dues – Rejected with 3,026 votes (65.63%)

BC-02 (Combined 16-12, 16-13, 16-14, 16-15, 16-16, 16-20, 16-36 to require 10 Regions be specified in the Bylaws) – Rejected with 3,089 votes (66.63%) – needing 1 more vote for adoption.

BC-01 – (Combined 16-18, 16-19, 16-37, 16-38, 16-41 to establish 5 Regions) – Rejected with 966 votes (20.79%)

16-08 – Proportional Distribution of Dues Income – Rejected with 1,319 votes (28.41%)

16-09 – Adjust Dues Within COLA Limits – Rejected with 1,208 votes (26.05%)

16-10 – Provide Mission Related Funding to Zip Code Based Chapters – Rejected with 1,324 votes (28.49%)

16-11 – Term of National Officers – Rejected with 1,690 votes (36.41%)

16-17 – Limit Terms of RVPs – Rejected with 1,451 votes (31.29%)

16-21 – Require publication of NEB Agenda online at least 14 days before meeting – Rejected with 1,779 votes (38.29%)

16-22 – Open NEB Meeting to the public – Rejected with 2,180 votes (46.95%)

NOTE: Any member may attend NEB meetings to observe, but not speak unless recognized.

16-23 – Require Recorded and Published Votes of the NEB on Policy Issues – Rejected with 2,167 votes (46.63%)

16-47 – Create a New Regional Federation of Chapters – Rejected with 296 votes (6.37%)

BC-03 (Combined 16-01, 16-02, 16-03, 16-04, 16-05, 16-35 regarding Membership Eligibility) – Rejected with 2,608 votes (56.32%)

BC-04 (Combined 16-25, 16-40 regarding salaries and expenses of RVPs) – Rejected

General Resolutions

16-46 – **Updating the NARFE Mission Statement – Adopted**

Legislation:

16-26 - as amended – **Establish Goal of NARFE Federal Senatorial & Representative District Liaison Teams** in all states – **Adopted**

16-39 – as amended – **Federation Structure – Adopted**

16-43 – as amended – **Allow Federation Congressional and Senatorial Liaisons to contact all NARFE members residing in their jurisdictions using the NARFE email system – Adopted**

16-44 – as amended – **To issue a new NARFE ID number when a membership is transferred from a deceased member to his/her spouse - Adopted**

16-45 – as amended – **To allow Federation Area/District Officers/Directors to use the NARFE email system – Adopted**

16-27 – Allow Caregiver Advise, Record, Enable (CARE) Act on Hospital Discharge Policies - Rejected

16-48 – National Strategic Plan Adoption – Rejected

16-29 – **Medicare Part B Premiums, “hold harmless” – Adopted**

16-31 – Adopt the position to **support raising the cap on Social Security withholding as a means of increasing the Social Security Trust Fund – Adopted**

16-34 – **To work with members of Congress to draft a bill to allow federal retirees to pay their medical insurance with pre-tax dollars, as active federal employees do – Adopted**

16-42 – as amended – **Supporting incentives for enrollment in Medicare Parts A and B for those eligible, including improved coordination of benefits that would reduce out-of-pocket health care costs and reimbursement for Part B premiums, providing premium relief for those enrolled in Part B – Adopted**

16-28 and 16-32 – **Supporting the option of recalculating annuities to include a construct of locality pay for retirees from Alaska, Hawaii, and the U.S. Territories. – Adopted**

16-30 – Support or legislation to double Social Security benefits over a 20year period – Rejected.

16-33 – Support for legislation to change the annual cost-of-living adjustment for federal retirees to no less than 2 percent. – Rejected.

Three provisions to address current policy issues. These call for NARFE to:

- Support legislation that would allow Thrift Savings Plan participants more flexible withdrawal options from their TSP accounts;
- Oppose conditions, such as a requirement to enroll in Medicare Part B, to the continued receipt of FEHBP benefits for current retirees and their spouses (as is proposed in postal reform legislation pending before congressional committees); and
- Support legislation to maintain the service standards in place as of July 2012, including preservation of six-day delivery nationwide and to-the-door delivery by the U.S. Postal Service.

The entire Legislative Program will be published in the January 2017 issue of NARFE magazine.



September 7, 2016

To: RVP's, Federation Presidents, Federation Membership Chairs and Federation Secretaries

Good afternoon. I would like to thank each of you who attended the 2016 National Convention in Reno. Significant decisions were made by the delegates and the National Executive Board

(NEB) that will usher in a new day for NARFE. Great strides have been made to ensure the continued success of NARFE and our important mission. Delegates demonstrated a selfless commitment to our great Association.

As all are no doubt aware, via electronic balloting, NARFE's mandatory chapter membership requirement was removed and a One Member, One Vote resolution was approved. In addition, and based on the optional chapter membership decision by the body, the NEB, by unanimous vote, rescinded the board incentive that had established eNARFE. This group of decisions requires a great deal of software programming and implementation here at Headquarters and new ways of going about the important business of NARFE within your federations. Below, I have provided details to ensure a smooth transition. I ask that this information be shared with appropriate officers within your federation.

- All members will continue to receive all benefits provided by NARFE, including: *narfe* magazine; access to the members-only portion of the NARFE website and blog; and access to the NARFE Federal Benefits Institute, the Legislative Hotline and *NARFE News Watch*. In ADDITION, members have enhanced benefits. Every member now has a vote and a say in NARFE governance and the election of NARFE officers. All are eligible to run for National Officer and Regional Vice President (RVP) positions. (Per NARFE's bylaws, only members of chapters and federations are eligible to run for chapter and federation offices.)
- Federations will continue to be provided Ten Percent Funds for every member who resides within that federation and/or is a member of a chapter within that federation. Only International Chapter members who do not have a stateside address (APO/FPO and foreign address) will be exempt from the 10 percent distribution.
- Those who had been a member of eNARFE have become national members. For an interim period, until considerable software programming can be done, national members will be coded 2363. As programming is completed, grandfathered National Only members, Life members with no chapter affiliation, and dues withholding/National Only members currently reported in chapter and federation records will be added to this category.
- The EC (Electronic Chapter) code will be eliminated and members removed from Region X reporting. A new National (NA) code has been developed.
- There is no longer an e-Division. This has been replaced by the National Division. Within the Online Activities Module (OAM), for NARFE Email System (NES) purposes, federation presidents and federation legislative chairs will have immediate access and will be able to view the national members within their federation by congressional district. At a later date, once the migration of the NARFE database in-house has been completed, Congressional District Leaders, Senatorial Leaders and District/Area Vice Presidents also will have access.
- NES content guidelines remain: National Division members may be emailed only for the purpose of communicating federation legislative activity or federation wide events.

Programming changes are already being made and, unless otherwise noted, the changes outlined above will be completed by week's end.

I understand that optional chapter membership comes just as the annual NARFE Membership Drive begins, and the all-important health fair recruitment season is close upon us. Here at Headquarters, we will need to do a full audit of all print and electronic membership materials; develop a comprehensive plan; and develop appropriate new materials, print brochures, etc. As I am sure you can imagine, there is no switch to click to turn on these changes. Based on these realities, below I have provided guidance for recruitment in the interim. Please share this with your federation and chapter members, who in turn, should share with all recruiters.

Until new materials can be developed and distributed, existing applications will continue to be used. Any application received without a local chapter designation will be assigned as a national member. Although the intent of the resolution passed requires all new members to first join NARFE before being offered the option of chapter membership within a welcome letter, we will honor chapter requests in this interim period, understanding that this was a choice of the new member.

Thank you for your patience as we implement these important changes. Please note, a less detailed message will be sent to all members.

Sincerely,

Richard G. Thissen
NARFE National President



September 7, 2016

Dear NARFE member,

Good afternoon. Having just returned from the NARFE 34th Biennial National Convention in Reno, Nevada, I would like to share some important outcomes from that gathering.

Recent extensive strategic planning led NARFE's National Executive Board to submit a number of resolutions to the Convention. These were based on our strong commitment to the long-term health of the Association and our ability to successfully drive NARFE's mission well into the future. Of significant note:

- **Membership in a NARFE chapter is now optional.** New members now will simply join NARFE. With their welcome information, new members will be provided the option to also join a local chapter. Likewise, renewing members may choose to belong to NARFE as a national member or opt to enjoy the benefits of their local chapter as well.
- All members will continue to receive all benefits provided by NARFE, including: narfe magazine; access to the members-only portion of the NARFE website and blog; and access to the NARFE Federal Benefits Institute, the Legislative Hotline and NARFE NewsWatch. In ADDITION, members have enhanced benefits. With passage of a One Member, One Vote resolution, every member now has a vote and a say in NARFE governance and the election of NARFE officers. **All are eligible to run for National Officer and Regional Vice President (RVP) positions.** (Per NARFE's bylaws, only members of chapters and federations are eligible to run for chapter and federation offices.)
- Please note, with the passage of optional chapter membership, the National Executive Board incentive program that established the eNARFE chapter has been rescinded. All members from this chapter are now national members with all the benefits listed above and will, upon renewal, be provided the option to join a local chapter.

For those of you who serve in officer positions and/or would like further information on implementation of these changes, your federation president, federation membership chair and federation secretary have been provided extensive notes.

These few changes will usher in a new day for NARFE. With them, great strides have been made to ensure the continued success of NARFE and our important mission.

Thank you for your membership.

Sincerely, Richard G. Thissen, NARFE National President

REMINDERS:

Convention Presentations are available on the NARFE website

National Division Member Support and Involvement for the 10% funds received needs to be established

National Bylaws being worked and should be available soon

Revised Chapter Closure Guidelines have been distributed to Federation Presidents

Membership Incentive - \$10 for every member recruited until end of year.

New Elevator Speech on NARFE Website see Form F-20.

Don't forget to use the Membership Marketing Manual (FH-19) for Recruiting

FEHBP Premiums available at www.OPM.gov. Open Season is November 14 – December 12

Support of PAH Calls and Monthly Webinars

Don't forget, if you miss a Webinar, they are available on the NARFE Website

When visiting Congressional offices don't forget to thank the Member of Congress for a good voting record on NARFE issues (October Magazine)

Begin consideration of Resolutions for 2017 Conventions

NARFE Legislative Conference – March 12-15, 2017

Hawaii Federation Convention – April 27 – 28, 2017 in Hilo, HI

California Federation Convention – May 2-3, 2017 in Reno, NV

Nevada Federation Convention – TBD in Las Vegas, NV

2018 National Conference – August 26 – 30, 2018, Jacksonville, FL

Region VIII Membership, September 2016:

NARFE Total: 216,145 Members; (32,691 National Members)

California Total: 16,030 Members; (2,537 National Members)

Hawaii Total: 2,167 Members; (298 National Members)

Nevada Total: 1,328 Members; (286 National Members)

Guam Total: 90 Members; (24 National Members)

Philippines Total: 268 Members; (0 National Members)

Thank you for the confidence you have placed in re-electing me to serve as your Region VIII Vice President. I look forward to serving the members for the next two years. Please don't hesitate to contact me with your questions and concerns.

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 Region VIII Vice President
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