



From: All of the Board
To: All of Chapter 190
Happy Holidays &
A Happy New Year!

MIGHTY 190 NARFE

NATIONAL ACTIVE and RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

Ventura County Chapter

<http://mysite.verizon.net/narfe190>

December 2008

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NOMINATING COMMITTEE

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CALENDAR "PRE-MINDER"

In January, we'll again return to having our luncheons on the "traditional" FOURTH Thursday. (But for December, it will be 18th.)

NARFE CHAPTER 190 NEWSLETTER PUBLISHING INFO

This newsletter is published monthly by Chapter 190 of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association. The above box lists chapter officers and committee chairpersons.

DECEMBER LUNCHEON MEETING

Place: Elks Club,

801 South A Street, Oxnard

Date: Thursday, December 18 - the 3rd Thursday

Time: 11:30 to socialize, 12:00 to dine

Cost: \$9.00 *(Note the new price)*

The reservation deadline for our next luncheon is **NOON**, Monday, December 15. Telephone **Marilou** at 382-8826 or e-mail her at **MARILOU653@aol.com** to make (or *cancel*) your reservation.

On **December 18**, we will meet at the Oxnard Elks Club. We'll begin with socializing at 11:30, with lunch served at noon. (If you arrive before 11:30, use the door that faces "A" Street.) The day's menu will be:

Stuffed Cornish Game Hen

Mashed Potatoes & Gravy Cranberry Sauce

Buttered Baby Carrots Rolls & Butter

Sherbet Tea & Coffee

DECEMBER PROGRAM

As is the custom, we won't be having a program, per se, in December. However, will we have a special guest? (Santa Claus ... ?)

As was the case last month, this month's meeting is also scheduled for the **THIRD** Thursday. It seems that the following Thursday will find us happily spending the day with family members, either here or some distance away.

We had invited our California Federation President, H. Ray Harrington, to attend the December luncheon and officially install the newly-elected Board members. Unfortunately for us, his calendar was already filled. Don't worry, though: your current board was re-elected by unanimous proclamation - again!

SO WHAT DOES THE "HISTORIAN" DO?

Maybe the Historian position stays vacant because its duties hadn't been defined before. **The Historian prepares and maintains a record of significant chapter activities, including photos and published articles.**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tony Pizza, President

At the November meeting Norma Featherston, Alzheimer's Association Area Director for the Central Coast, presented information about memory loss and other symptoms of dementia. She also told us that the free services provided by the Association are paid for by donations and grants.

Since 1985 NARFE members have donated more than \$7 million to the NARFE Alzheimer's Fund (as of October 2008). Our chapter collects donations at the monthly meetings. Those who attend put their donations in baskets at their tables. This year, we donated \$336 to the local and \$168 to the national Alzheimer's Associations.

For those of you who do not regularly attend the meetings but would like to make a donation, send it to Carl Bailey, 235 E Olive St., Oxnard CA 93033-4533. (DO NOT SEND CASH.) Make checks out to NARFE Chapter 190, so we can combine all the donations.

If you need their help, the number for the Ventura County Chapter Office of the Alzheimer's Association is 485-5597; for Santa Barbara, it's 892-4259.

Thanks to the efforts of VP Juanita Davis, we had 10 reinstatements of members whose memberships had lapsed. Juanita sent reminder letters to them. Because renewals and reminders sometimes cross in the mail, a few of you may have received letters after you renewed. Sorry, but we'll try to avoid that happening in the future. I hate to report this, but this month there were also five losses due to non-payment of dues. I hope we can reinstate them too. If only there was some way to avoid those NPD losses. Oh wait, there's dues withholding. If only....

Sam, 80 years old, was a witness in a burglary case. The young whippersnapper defense lawyer asked Sam, "Did you see my client commit this burglary?" "Yes," said Sam, "I saw him plainly take the goods." The lawyer asks Sam again, "Sam, this happened at night. Are you sure you saw my client commit this crime?" "Yes," says Sam, "I saw him do it." Then the lawyer asks Sam, "Sam, listen, you are 80 years old and your eye sight is probably bad. Just how far can you see at night?" Sam says, "I can see the moon, how far is that?"

- Tony

ALZHEIMER'S DONATIONS

After our speaker concluded her presentation, the checks that Tony presented to her represent what we've collected in the baskets on the tables. As you can see, the \$1 in your table's basket each time all adds up!

SERVICE OFFICER'S CORNER

by Bob Willis, Service Officer

While Bob is frolicking in the cold wilderness of Boston. We'll use his space to write about a "service" available to NARFE members: "FEEA." As you know, whenever natural disaster strikes, we're invited to assist the victims via "FEEA." But what is "FEEA"?

The Federal Employee Education & Assistance Fund (FEEA) was established in 1986 to provide emergency grants and loans to federal employees affected by a natural disaster.

NARFE became involved with FEEA after the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City was bombed on April 19, 1995. NARFE federations, chapters and individual members donated \$100,000 to FEEA's Oklahoma City Fund. NARFE donations helped fund college scholarships for all 200 children who lost a federal employee parent in that bombing.

In 1996, NARFE entered into partnership with FEEA to provide emergency disaster assistance through the NARFE-FEEA Disaster Fund to NARFE members who are victims of a declared natural disaster. The Fund is supported by tax-deductible donations from NARFE members and friends of NARFE; FEEA administers it. Some \$320,000 in NARFE disaster assistance funds helped 468 NARFE members following Hurricane Katrina and 37 additional NARFE members since then (as of October 2008). NARFE became a member of FEEA's board of directors in 1997.

CONVENIENCE OF DUES WITHHOLDING

As Tony noted in his president's message, this month saw that 10 members whose memberships had lapsed were reinstated. Half as many had their memberships lapse, simply because their dues hadn't been paid.

Here's a way to have one less thing to deal with every month: have your NARFE dues withheld from each month's annuity. See **Carl Bailey** or **Juanita Davis** at our luncheon for more information or to sign up. (You'll need your membership number for the authorization form.)

Once you authorize it, OPM will take \$2.63 from your annuity each month. You won't have to write and send a check for your annual dues. Not only that, but when you sign up for withholding, Juanita or Carl will give you \$10 cash - on the spot! (And because you'll get the long-term rate, it'll cost you less per year, too!)

It's not such a convenient arrangement that it can't be reversed. Should it ever become necessary to stop the automatic withholding, you can do that as well - but then you'll have to again write the monthly checks.

LEGISLATION

by George Ramirez

We may get discouraged because although we can get support from many legislators, we can't get current legislation for premium conversion and elimination of WEP and GPO out of committee. It is frustrating that certain committee chairmen prevent votes to be taken. With the current fiscal situation, it's unlikely we'll have progress anytime soon. Such things are beyond the control of NARFE.

But let's remember: **There has been no legislated reduction in civil service retirement benefits in more than a decade.** Despite years of budget deficits, major natural disasters, a changing world economy, wars abroad and terrorist attacks at home, our earned benefits have remained untouched because NARFE, backed by activist members and supportive members of Congress, has acted as a deterrent against adverse proposals.

In 2007 the President's FY 2008 budget included a reduction in government Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) contributions for certain future retirees. It also advocated expanding Health Saving Accounts in the FEHBE. NARFE was instrumental in eliminating those items from the final congressional Budget Resolution.

In 2006 the Senate Budget Committee approved a bill requiring automatic reductions in federal civilian and military retirement benefits. NARFE saw to it that no further action was taken. NARFE persuaded the House Education and the Workforce Committee to not reduce federal workers' compensation benefits after the House version of the FY 2007 Budget Resolution instructed the committee to cut entitlement programs by \$1.3 billion.

In 2005, Congress proposed to cut federal civilian retirement benefits (including the FEHBP and cost-of-living adjustments) by \$2.3 billion from the FY 2005 budget. NARFE, with the help of friends in Congress, was successful in having this proposal dropped.

NARFE acts as your "insurance policy" against a reduction in your annuities and health-care protection. Federal health care and retirement benefits are always vulnerable, particularly with a budget deficit.

FOOD SHARE DONATIONS

At the November luncheon, we collected canned and other non-perishable foods that were to be given to FOOD Share. Marilou usually delivers our donations to the organization, but this time was different. Jeanne Benetiz (from FOOD Share) was speaking to the Officers' Wives Club and offered to deliver the foods.

Marilou later received a phone call to say that we had supplied 109 pounds of food. Not only were the FOOD Share folks pleased, but so were the people to whom the food was distributed. We helped to brighten their Thanksgiving with the food we'd donated.

This month, we'll have another chance to help make their holidays brighter because we'll also collect canned and non-perishable foods at December's meeting.

As I'm sure you're aware, this is an especially difficult year for many people. Please give if you're able - maybe a little extra if you can - and help spread some holiday cheer.

To those who have given, a big THANK YOU!!

GIVING GIFT CARDS THIS YEAR?

"Caveat Emptor"

Giving gift cards as gifts has gained popularity in recent years. They don't take much room and the recipient can use them to get whatever they want or need.

However, there is an admonition that goes with the gift card: It should be used sooner, rather than later.

Many dollars spent on gift cards go unredeemed and the gift card's value expires. Sometimes the card itself even has an expiration date; if it's not used by that date, it becomes valueless.

With today's economic situation, the gift cards may have more risk as the stores themselves may go out of business. Sometimes - if the holder is lucky - another store may accept the gift card, at a reduced value. But most often, the gift card suddenly becomes worthless.

Either way, if you're giving gift cards, include words to tell the recipients to use them "right away." (The day after Christmas sales may be a great time!) That way, you'll feel good for having given something useful, and both you and the recipients will be happy.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

	<u>Members</u>
End of last month	833
New members	26
Dropped/Transferred	<u>- 6</u>
GRAND TOTAL	853

TREASURER'S REPORT

End of the last month balance	\$4,527.22
Receipts	1,213.27
Disbursements	<u>(1,324.34)</u>
End of month balance	4,416.15
Petty cash	+ <u>25.00</u>
GRAND TOTAL	\$ 4,441.15

NEW MEMBERS THIS MONTH

We have 26 (yes, 26!!) new or reinstated members this month. Please welcome **Margaret Anderson, Steven Arbuckle, Amy Ayers, Betty Book, Anne Braden, Jean Brownell, Don Buford, Marcela Castro, Jo Marlene Conk, Donald Curtis, Lucille Dougan, Randall Dzialo, Paul Greiman, Michelle Hoffman, Lawrence Lauer, Betty Kincaid, David Lawrence, Beatrice McCay, Betty McLemen, Leroy McMichael, Alvin Meissner, Beatrix Monks, Beatrice Morse, Ted Shugar, Patricia Tugwell and Charles White.**

Please be sure to meet and welcome each of our new members. Make them feel "at home" with us!

PLANNING AHEAD: NEXT LAUGHLIN TRIP

Just so you'll know: Our next bus trip to Laughlin is to be March 8 - 10, 2009. Watch for more information.

FOOD SHARE of VENTURA COUNTY

In a recent discussion, there were several comments about the economy and charities. One question was about FOOD Share and what happens to the food we've donated. Here's some background from their website:

Founded in 1978, FOOD Share is Ventura County's only regional food bank. FOOD Share collects and receives food year-round and distributes millions of pounds of food each year via partners and agencies located throughout the county. That network of partners provides food to pantries, congregate meal sites, brown bag-USDA distributions and produce outreach efforts.

Ventura County's FOOD Share is a member of Feeding America, the national network of food banks, as well as the California Association of Food Banks.

GIFT CERTIFICATES FOR SEE'S CANDIES

A pound of See's candy at the store now costs \$15, but only \$12.50 will get you a gift certificate for a pound of See's. **Marilou Banlangue** has them at our luncheons (or call her). The sales serve as a fundraiser for our chapter; they're great for holiday gift-giving. Hurry - with deals like this, Santa may want 'em all!

ASSIST DISASTER VICTIMS

Last month we noted that the Federal Employee Education Assistance (FEEA) had received calls and requests from NARFE members due to Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. The recent Southern California fires also resulted in such requests.

NARFE members everywhere were asked to respond in support of such requests. In this holiday season, the request is more urgent; our responses are appreciated all the more. So again, NARFE members are asked to respond to this appeal.

You may use the coupon on page 43 of the November issue of the *NARFE* magazine to send a contribution to FEEA. Just send it to:

FEEA
3333 S. Wadsworth Blvd, Suite 300
Lakewood CO 80227

FINAL LUNCHEON REMINDERS

January's luncheon will be on the **FOURTH** Thursday; make your reservations by noon, Monday, January 19. We'll have sweet & sour pork chops.

This month's luncheon will be on the **THIRD** Thursday - December 18th. Please be sure to make your reservations by noon Monday, December 15.

Return Service Requested

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