



**NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED  
FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION  
PUTNAM COUNTY—COOKEVILLE TENNESSEE**  
**\*\*Protecting Our Future\*\***

**Chapter 1956 Newsletter**

**April 2016**

**Notes from last meeting**

I was somewhat concerned about attendance just prior to the last meeting. I received phone calls and messages that 7 of our regular members were sick or otherwise could not attend. But as it turned out, we had fairly good size attendance, not as much as we need but better than I thought we would have. The weather was great and the time change helped.

The program was presented by Houston Bynum who is the Administrator at Happy Haven Home for Children. He presented a nice talk of that ministry which has been in operation for 51 years. The location is a 40 acre site which is in Cookeville, some may remember it as the old County Poor Farm. Houston has been with the work for 6 years.

It is a small children's home with currently about 8 children with a capacity of about 15. The take in mostly girls and young boys that are troubled or otherwise are at risk. Some have parents or grandparents that just cannot take care of them. They do get some referrers from the local government agencies, but limit that to the less troubled of them. The following is from their mission statement: "Happy Haven Children's Home seeks to help children grow in their physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being".

While they must meet all state guidelines, they do not receive any funds from the state or federal governments. They do receive funding and donations from churches, individuals, businesses and some grants. Houston said that they had their annual fundraising dinner scheduled the weekend following our meeting. They qualify for tax-exempt donations and I am sure they would welcome a donation from our members. Why not send them a donation in appreciation of speaking to our group. For more information call them at 931-526-2052 or go to the website at [www.happyhaven.org](http://www.happyhaven.org).

In other news from the last meeting, we tried to cover the normal officer reports with some of our leaders missing. I made reference to the legislative news from the last newsletter. Those present were urged to use the form and envelope with the March magazine to send in a donation to NARFE-PAC. This being an election year, that is important. Minutes of our meeting are on the chapter website.

Please share these newsletters with your spouse

**News on upcoming meetings**

Don't forget that we normally skip the regular meeting in the month of April in order to attend the NARFE Federation Convention. That will be the case for this year as well and as a result, there will not be a meeting this month. The next regular chapter meeting will be on May 17th. I will post more about that next month. We do have speakers lined up for the May and June meetings. I will post more about that later. You can find a sneak peak on upcoming speakers on our chapter website.

**Latest news on the COLA**

The February data came out about mid-March and it shows a continual decline in the Consumer Price Index CPI-W which determines the annual cost of living adjustments (if any) for federal retirees and S S recipients. The February change was .04 percent lower, making the change so far for the year to be, 1.4 percent lower. As you could guess, the recent cost of fuel is most likely the driving force, but since February gas prices are going back up. We will just have to see how these numbers play out for the rest of the reporting year which goes to September.

**Membership**

Not only do we desire to gain new members for our association, we certainly want to retain all our current members. Membership in groups like our is all important, for without member support, we are very limited in what can be accomplished. You may not be able to be as involved in the many legislative actions that we ask members to be involved in, but just remaining a member is a BIG help.

So as a reminder, when you get that notice in the mail that it is time to renew your membership dues to NARFE, go ahead and send that in. Thanks for this.

**Chapter Officers**

President	Ronnie Collins
Vice-President	Vacant
Secretary	Reba Collins
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**No Meeting In April  
See You In May**

### Legislative news

NARFE has provided the following information on recent legislative action. I hope that you see that our national office is doing a lot in support of federal employees.

**Congress holds WEP hearing.** On March 22, the House Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee held a hearing, "Social Security and Public Employees: Ensuring Equal Treatment." The hearing focused on the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP); Government Pension Offset (GPO); and the Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act of 2015, H.R. 711, the WEP reform legislation introduced by Ways and Means Chairman Kevin Brady, R-TX.

H.R. 711 if passed would: For those who turn age 62 before 2017, the amount of the reduction will be determined by the Social Security Administration (SSA) actuary, but is estimated to be about 50 percent of an individual's current WEP penalty. The amount would be based on how much SSA expects to recover through increased enforcement of the WEP, as directed by the bill, on state and local government retirees who had underreported their government employment earnings. For individuals who turn 62 during or after 2017, the bill would replace the current WEP formula with a fairer one, saving most WEP-affected individuals about \$77 per month.

The hearing focused mainly on the WEP, and committee members from both parties generally agreed that the WEP unfairly penalizes retirees and reform is needed. No decisions were made, but Chairman Brady hinted that the committee may move to advance H.R. 711 soon.

**House committee approves FY17 budget resolution.** The proposed budget was passed by the House Budget Committee by a 20 to 16 vote. At it stands right now, it is uncertain if there is enough support to pass it in the full House.

The House budget proposed would include these items: An increase in retirement contributions for all current federal employees. A 10 percent reduction of the federal civilian workforce through attrition, whereby one employee would be hired for every three who leave government service. A decrease in the rate of return on the Thrift Savings Plan's G Fund. Increase postal employees' share of their FEHBP premiums.

Ahead of this vote, NARFE sent a letter to the committee members, telling them to leave any cuts to the federal community out of the budget.

**Senate Fair Act introduced.** Known as S. 2699, it would provide for a 5.3 percent across-the-board pay increase for federal employees in 2017, which is greater than the 1.6 percent pay increase proposed by President Obama.

### NARFE Webinars

NARFE has been for the past several months providing free online discussions on some very important subjects by way of webinars. These are video presentations by Tammy Flanagan, a federal benefits and retirement expert. I think that normally there is a cost to seeing these, but they are free to NARFE members.

Each one is shown live 2 times, and scheduled on a Tuesday and Thursday. You have to pre-register and be online on the specified website to watch these live as they are taking place. There is normally set aside time for those watching to ask questions. Those with email addresses set up with NARFE should be receiving notifications in advance of these.

These are also recorded and made available after the fact and you can go back and watch them again, or for the first time whenever you want. Right now I see that they have 5 of the past webinars available and I am not sure how long they keep them available.

#### **Past webinars have been on these subjects:**

*Will You Be Ready For Retirement*

*FEHBP & Medicare: Make the BEST Choice*

*From Federal Employee to Annuitant: Master the Process!*

*What's YOUR Best Retirement Date*

*Survivor Benefits: Key Decisions for Feds of All Ages*

#### **Upcoming webinars scheduled are:**

*Exploring TSP Withdrawal Options—May 26*

*5 Year Countdown to Retirement—June 30*

*Post Retirement—September 15*

*FEHBP and Medicare—October 13*

*Alphabet Soup of Health Plans—November 17*

I think some of these subjects have been and will be of interest to most of us. Again, these are available online over the internet. If you happen to not have a computer, I am sure some family member does have and you may be able to watch them that way. Let me know if you have any questions.

### On the light side

Next month, the Immigration Department will start deporting seniors (instead of illegals) in order to lower Social Security and Medicare costs. Older people are easier to catch and less likely to remember how to get back home.

A three year-old put his shoes on by himself. His mother noticed and said, "Son, your shoes are on the wrong feet." to which he said. "Don't kid me, Mom, I know they're my feet."

### NARFE IS ON THE WEB

Chapter 1956: [www.narfecookevilletn.org](http://www.narfecookevilletn.org)

Tennessee Federation: [www.narfetn.org](http://www.narfetn.org)

NARFE Headquarters: [www.narfe.org](http://www.narfe.org)