



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

Chapter 1956 Newsletter

February 2016

Notes from last meeting

Our start for the new year for our regular meetings was a cold start. It did warm up on the day of the meeting to the 30s for the high and 20s for the low, that kept many from coming I think. Attendance was very low, but as always, we were thankful for those who came out in January. All were regulars, no guests and no new members.

We did attempt to schedule a guest speaker for this meeting, but were not able to confirm any. We used the time to discuss and suggest who would make for good speakers or programs in the months to come. I wrote down lots of good suggestions that I can use to work off of. It is not too late to suggest others if you think of someone not mentioned or if you were not there this past meeting.

We do need a certain number in attendance at the meetings to make it worth the time for any invited speaker to come and present a program. This past meeting, there were really not enough for that. I need your help with this. If you are a member of our chapter who lives in the area or surrounding area and are able to get out and about, then I ask that you support our monthly meetings. We do try our best to talk about many of the issues which could affect the pay and benefits of federal employees and retirees. This could be items that you are not aware of and need to act upon. If you need a ride, many have said they were willing to provide a ride to our meeting. Let me know or someone else that you know who attends. Let's work together to keep our meetings supported.

As usual, I spoke about several items of interest in the way of NARFE news; including chapter dues, the upcoming State Convention, and the election year. We had the latest Treasurer's Report, Membership Report and Legislative Report. There are some new items of legislation that has been introduced in Congress that we were made aware of. Our national headquarters is asking that we contact our members of Congress on many of those items. It is important that they hear from you before they cast a vote on a bill that could have long term affect on you or your survivors.

The chapter approved 2 members who were ready to commit to attend the State Convention as delegates. We can have a few more if there is interest.

Please share these newsletters with your spouse

Next meeting

Our **February meeting** will be on the **16th.** of this month at our normal location which is Shoney's Restaurant on Jefferson Ave. in Cookeville. Remember to get there early enough to order and eat prior to the business session which starts promptly at 6:45pm. I would suggest you get there by 6:00pm or earlier.

Our scheduled speaker is Donna Mason, owner of the Affordable Travel Company. Now is a good time to plan ahead for any travel that you may want to make in the coming months. So come to hear from her this month.

Sunshine report

We have learned of the passing of Virginia Masters, wife of member, Bill Masters. This is late news, but she lived in Cookeville and passed on November 20, 2015. Bill is a past president of our chapter (2005) and we send our deepest sympathies to him.

We try to keep aware of deaths of our members and family, but it is sometimes difficult to do. We welcome news from you if you know of someone who has died or is having health issues and is connected to our chapter. Just let us know by calling me or Connie Banker, sending an email. Thanks.

2016 NARFE Scholarship Program

It is that time of year for the high school seniors to enter the competition for next year's college expenses. NARFE will award \$1000 to 60 winners. The contest is open to children and grandchildren of NARFE members. Applications must submit an essay as part of the contest. The application period runs from February 1st to April 29th this year.

Complete details are in the February issue of the NARFE magazine on page 47 and available online on the NARFE website: www.narfe.org

Chapter Officers

President	Ronnie Collins
Vice-President	Vacant
Secretary	Reba Collins
Treasurer	Myrna Estes

Contact Information:

NARFE Chapter 1956
118 Ballenger Rd., Carthage TN 37030
E-mail: rwcollins@hydroguy.com
Phone or Text: 931-284-4835

Thanks to all of you who have recently renewed your membership

2016 NARFE Conventions

So far we have 2 members of our chapter who are set to attend the Federation Convention as a delegate. There is still time for others to go as a delegate or just as a member. I will have the necessary forms at the next chapter meeting and they are also on the Federation website and in the Federation Newsletter.

The Federation Convention this year will be on April 25-26 which is a week later than normal. Hosting the convention is the Knoxville Chapter and it will be at the MainStay Suites in Pigeon Forge. The room rate is \$79 and the registration costs is \$55 for both Monday and Tuesday. Larry Minniear has requested that chapters get delegates selected earlier this year to give time for him to assign delegates to the various committees. Delegates must be approved by our chapter which we can do at the meeting.

I hope you will consider going to the state convention this year. Spring is a good time to visit the area where the convention will be. The convention committee is working to make this an interesting convention and worthy of your time.

I want to call your attention to the work going on at the national level in regards to the Future of NARFE or now as it is called **Strategic Planning**. This will be a huge subject this year at both the federation convention and the national convention. It is clear that some changes to the association are needed as we move into the future and those changes could have a great impact on the local chapter, the federations and more. There is a special section that covers the work going on that can be found on the national website. I would encourage you to go there and study this information.

At some point, we should have some resolutions presented that we will need to discuss prior to the National Convention.

Membership news

Membership numbers are always a concern. Not only do we need each of you to remain as a member, but we need new members as well. Remember, the more members that we have, the more influence that NARFE will have in persuading Congress to support our legislative goals.

There are ways to get new members, one is to hand one of our membership forms to someone that you know who is working for or has retired from any federal agency. Another way is to sign up your spouse as a member. We have many in our chapter who have already done that, but there are others who could do that. Let me encourage you to do that right away. Let me know if I can help.

Legislative news

The latest that I have on current legislation is listed here, be sure to come to meeting to hear more about these items and more:

- **H.R. 711 WEP Reform Bill**—This bill would not repeal the Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision, but it would make some changes to reduce the penalties for some. For individuals who turn 62 prior to 2017, the bill would reduce the current WEP penalty on their Social Security benefits by a certain percentage, not to exceed 50 percent. For those turning 62 after 2017, the formula used to determine an individual's WEP penalty would be replaced with a fairer formula. I know those are not much details, but it is all we have been told. The bill is cost neutral and has a chance of passing. NARFE supports this bill.
- **Postal Reform Hearing**—On January 21st, the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs held a hearing on postal reform. NARFE has sent a letter to committee members stating the Association's opposition to mandatory Medicare integration and citing that postal retirees should not be forced to take health care coverage they do not want or need as a condition of keeping their current health care plan. NARFE is also opposed to another provision that would reduce Federal Employees' Compensation Act benefits by cutting them by 25-35 percent for workers and eliminating supplemental benefits for beneficiaries with dependents.
- **The omnibus spending package**—This contained wording which extends identity theft protection services for 10 years for all victims of the Office of Personnel Management's two data breaches. NARFE is pleased with this but continues to advocate and support S. 1746/H.R. 3029, the Reducing the Effects of the Cyberattack on OPM Victims Emergency Response Act which extends lifetime protection services for all victims.
- **FY 2017 Budget**—Congress has just begun work on this process which will take many months. The Fiscal Year 2017 finale budget is likely to bring cuts to the federal community. NARFE will be watching this and should have more to report as the process goes forward.

Again, I urge you keep up with the legislative items of concern by attending our meetings and checking out the Legislative Section of the NARFE website. Remember these items could affect **you**.

NARFE IS ON THE WEB

Chapter 1956: www.narfecookevilletn.org
Tennessee Federation: www.narfetn.org
NARFE Headquarters: www.narfe.org