

The Heartbeat of the Nebraska Federation

Issue Number 14

Spring2019

Alice Stevens, Editor

Notes from the President

I hope all is well with you, our members. Being out here near the Wyoming Border I can only imagine how tornados, rain and yes snow and hail have impacted Middle and Eastern Nebraska these last few months.

I traveled to Omaha in April to make a presentation to the Omaha Chapter 144 at their request. I started out with the health of the Nebraska Federation and what is happening regarding chapters closing and what is required to legally close a chapter. When I took office as president, we had 10 chapters. In the past two years, Columbus and Norfolk chapters have been closed. The Pine Ridge chapter has stated they are dropping out of the Nebraska Federation.

The trend is troubling. I know that existing chapters are having difficulty in getting officers because it appears that most active chapter members have been through leadership roles.

What I recommended to the Omaha chapter that they have a business meeting once a quarter and program/social meetings in-between. It is important for Chapters to take a survey from registered members on what they feel makes coming to your meeting important to them. What changes, if any, are needed to attract new members and keep existing members engaged.

Your Nebraska Federation officers had our May meeting in Grand Island this year. I was impressed with their participation. Also, in attendance was our Region 5 Vice President Cindy Blythe who gave us an update at the National Level. See Cindy's report.

I want you to know that you in the Federation have strong Officers in Nancy Stenger as your Secretary. Nancy has helped hold this organization together and move us forward in developing our Federation website (www.nebraskanarf.org). She is organized and dedicated to doing an outstanding job for the Federation. Jana Cornelius needs to be recognized for her outstanding job in handling the Federations financial business as your treasurer. Alice Stevens stepped up in helping me in representing the Nebraska Federation at National Meeting for Federation Presidents and attending the Legislative Conference in Washington DC this year. Alice has been instrumental in developing our Federation Newsletter. Bob Voboril is a strong Alzheimer's Chairman and Historian. Bob has a way of keeping us focused. (Nancy has a way of keeping us focused as well.) Our District Reps Art Christiansen District 1, Dennis Kamprath District 2 and Beth Fries District 3 have been reporting their efforts and participating in Board meeting. We have purchased a power point projector for each District Rep so they can assist you in programs you may need.

You currently have a strong slate of officers for one more year. At our last meeting, Jana and Nancy announced that they will not be available to run as Treasurer or Secretary.

We will need a full slate of new officers for 2020. Nominations for Nebraska Federation Officers for President, Secretary and Treasurer are open now. Nominations are to be sent to ROGER EGGLESTON ssare@allophone.com. We need your participation in the Nebraska Federation as an officer.

We are presently working on putting together a nominating committee for you to vote on prior to our May 15, 2020, meeting in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Your Nebraska Federation was formed on June 10, 1963. Fifty-seven years of helping and supporting our chapters. Now we are challenged to support all NARFE members in Nebraska, to inform all members about what is needed to protect their earned rights and benefits as America's active and retired federal workers. To meet your needs, we need your feedback on what you want us to provide as it relates to the mission of NARFE.

Looking at the President's 2020 budget proposal and what was pointed out in the June NARFE Magazine cutting \$177 billion in federal employee pay and benefits. Also, the information regarding U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board in the Senate is troubling. We need present members and new members to come together in creating a strong Federal Employee voice in Nebraska.

As an Officer in the Federation, there is money to send you to authorized meetings regarding advocacy, National Meeting, State Meetings and other approved travel in support of chapters and the federation.

I will be attending the Presidents meeting in July in Scottsdale, Arizona, this year and hope to have a better understanding of the new association management system (AMS), needed Bylaw changes at the Chapter, Federation, and National levels and rumored.

The Nebraska Federation needs your active participation.

I hope you all have an active and enjoyable summer!!

Ronald W. Moore
Federation President

Notes from the Region 5 Vice President

I'm delighted to be representing Region V as your Region Vice-President. I want to thank you for the invitation to speak during your 2019 Federation Conference.

My agenda today is to bring you up-to-date on issues being worked on at NARFE headquarters and other issues of interest to you as members.

As we all know, NARFE continues to have an issue with the loss of members from our organization. This loss of members has a two-fold consequence on the overall operation; first we lose the “safety in numbers” theme. When our legislative department discusses our issues with members of Congress, the sheer magnitude of the total number of members can resonate for or against an issue. Imagine what the outcome would be if we would say that we are 500,000 members strong. Right now, when we address our member of Congress, we tell them we represent less than 200,000 members. When we are up against an organization like AARP and they are taking the opposite side of an issue, the sheer numbers of members alone are enough to pull the vote over to the other side no matter how excellent our argument.

If you remember years back, NARFE organized a committee to try and come up with ideas to turn the decline of membership around. That committee was called The Future of NARFE. That committee produced a white paper document with at least 13 action items. Two of those action items are what we now have as One-Member-One-Vote and Optional Chapter Membership. But another item was called Supporting Members. The idea of supporting members is that any person, regardless of their ability to have a government annuity can have the opportunity to join NARFE. The idea behind the whole thing was that more and more families now a days have gone back to the belief that they should take an active part in their older generation’s livelihood. Instead of going to a nursing care facility, they are being cared for in the home. If the children are caring for their parents, giving them a ride to the monthly meetings and attending to the finances, then why not let them join the organization and partake in the member benefits. The idea kind of blossomed into how about letting someone join if they have like ideas, example being the retired navy officer. Although not the same but not extremely different. Well the National Executive Board has taken quite a hit that supporting members hasn’t made it in the bylaws yet and now there may be an excellent reason why they never will. The legal representative representing NARFE’s interest has researched the option and there may be a tax implication that is detrimental to our organization. If the inclusion of members outside of our “family” is being done to bring in income, then that income would be taxed accordingly. Since we already have issues with insufficient revenue, we don’t need to head down the wrong road. So, the National Executive Board (NEB) will be looking further into this issue and will notify the membership when a decision has been made.

Speaking of membership; as of March 31st we have a total of 198,610 members. We gained 5,438 in new and reinstated members but have lost a total of 8,126 since the beginning of 2019. Our losses are from cancellations, dropped for non-payment and reported deaths. You know we can’t do anything about the decline in membership from the deaths but somehow, we need to maintain those members we drop from cancelling their membership or forget to pay their annual dues.

The NEB is looking into ways to increase what is known as non-dues revenue. By definition, non-dues revenue is any money brought into the organization by other than member dues. The income generated from the offering of webinars falls under that category. Our marketing department has scheduled 18 webinars for 2019. This venue does bring in new members for the organization along with some revenue.

A new attraction added to Member Perks, with the intention of increasing our non-dues revenue, is the discounts available on movie tickets, show packages to Las Vegas, Universal Orlando, Walt Disney World Parks, Broadway, and Sea World to mention a few. If you have any plans to visit any of these venues, please check out the National website before purchasing your tickets and remember, movie tickets make great presents for children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren!

The biggest non-revenue item we are looking at is the NARFE building. NAREF purchased our building November 1997. The purchase price was \$350,000.00. The value of the land and improvements is now \$9,000,000.00, but the main issue is that the total number of employees at National Headquarters has decreased and we just don't utilize all four floors or even need all the floors. A committee has been chartered to recommend to the NEB what could/should be done to better utilize our biggest asset. Options being discussed are compressing NARFE to the first and second floor; opening up the third and fourth floors for lease to another organization; doing some remodeling to make apartments for National Officers; selling the building and relocating closer to Capitol Hill. This is not going to be an easy decision; there are members that have a very strong attachment to the building and what it means to NARFE. The current employees stand to lose an important way that they have been used to. As an organization, we can't continue to do things just because that's the way we've always done it. Remember, the definition of insanity is doing something the same way and expecting a different outcome. We need to start letting our asset do us some good instead of using the old standard of raising membership dues when we need to increase revenue.

NARFE's premier legislative conference, LegCon2019 was conducted in Washington during the month of March. The final day, the attendees went to Capitol Hill to discuss NARFE issues with their Congressional representatives. I actually joined the South Dakota delegate and was able to attend their sessions. We've all returned home but we can't stop the pressure on Congress. Once again, the congressional budget is taking aim at federal pay and benefits. President Trump has proposed a pay freeze for federal employees for 2020, and this after he issued an Executive Order giving them a 1.9% pay raise this year. This is what my father used to call giving with one hand and taking with the other.

In the last 10 years, the federal retired community hasn't lost any benefits. Mainly because Congress has focused on the active federal community rather than the retired one. But we really haven't won anything for the retired sector either. We continue to push the WEP/GPO issue but NARFE can't move it further down the road if we can't get the right Congressional support behind us. There are some NARFE members that are saying we should be focusing all our resources on the retired community and should drop the active federal community. Those same members believe that federal employees are being taken care of by the union. That might have been the case two decades ago, but the only issues unions are concerned with now are labor issues. There is no assistance for pre-retirement decisions at the local agency offices any longer and there isn't a whole lot of trust in the information when you get some. Advocacy is a major benefit of NARFE membership and we must continue putting forward a strong front so Congress will take our issues seriously.

If you haven't already, I highly recommend that you sign up to receive the NARFE Legislative Hotline newsletter. This newsletter provides a wonderful overview of pending legislation and will keep members up-to-date on proposals the Legislative department is working on. There are also easy to use links provided within the document that allow you to quickly send a letter to your congressional representative.

Soon there will be a push within each federation to reach out to the chapters and help them update their bylaws. When the amended National bylaws went into effect July 2018, each Federation updated their bylaws to come within specifications with National. Now each chapter must do the same thing to work within the guidelines of the Federation. Katheryn Hensley, National Secretary/Treasurer has worked to provide a template for changing the chapter bylaws. The template was sent via email to each Federation and chapter president listed on the NARFE Email System in February. I know that some chapters have made changes in their leadership and the new president may not have the information. If you are a chapter president, please contact your federation secretary and work to update the bylaws.

The National headquarters IT department has working on transitioning the Online Automated Reports system to a new system, Association Management System. The system features improved navigation and easier member control. You should be able to quickly and easily update your member record. Another added spark to the new AMS system is the expansion of access on the federation level to National Members thru the NES system. During the March NEB meeting, the officers granted expansion on the Federation level to federation legislative chair, membership chair, area/district vice-presidents, and CDL/SDL chairs. The new AMS system will go live June 1st. The system is going thru testing right now and there will be webinars available along with a user manual. Stay tuned for this next chapter in reports management.

I know that many of you have been wondering about the College of NARFE Knowledge (CoNK). I have contacted the Hilton Garden Inn in Sioux City Iowa and have tentatively scheduled September 24 thru 26. The Hilton Garden Inn is just up the river from the hotel CoNK has been held in the last several years. I don't have the registration cost yet, but the hotel cost is \$114.00 plus tax per night and that includes breakfast. Like I said, I'm still working with the hotel sales staff and might be able to get a better price on the hotel room. Stay tuned for more information. Before I set back down, I want to say again thank you for inviting me to your conference. Please feel free to contact me should you have an issue that needs assistance and have a great time visiting with old friends and new ones.

Cindy Blythe
Region 5 Vice President

Notes from the Vice President

I had the privilege of attending LEGcon19 in Alexandria, VA, in March 2019. After 2 ½ days of training on how to approach our National Legislative Representatives and speeches from several Legislators, we spent all of the third day at Capitol Hill. I was pleased to get to speak with Congressman Jeff Fortenberry and Congressman Adrian Smith. I met with staff from the offices of

Senator Deb Fischer and Senator Ben Sasse. My talking points with each included making the COLA for CSRS and FERS employees the same, using CPI-E to determine the COLA amount, repeal of the WEP provisions, the necessity of keeping Medicare provisions the same, and fairness in the pay and benefits for current and future employees.

The entire conference was interesting and fun. I was the only attendee from Nebraska, but was lucky to meet many others from all over the USA. I would encourage any one of you to attend the next conference in 2021.

Be sure to check out the Nebraska Federation website designed and maintained by our Federation Secretary, Nancy Stenger, at www.nebraskanarfe.org.

Alice Stevens
Federation Vice President

Notes from the Alzheimer's Chair

Final Report on ALZ donations.....

Here are the results of donations given to me from May 15, 2018 to May 20, 2019 from Chapters that I received by May 20th.

Largest Amount by Chapters

Gr. Island #1509 : \$613.20
Lincoln #0199 : \$540.00
Omaha #0144 : \$522.41
Hastings #0362 : \$428.75
Omaha #1370 : \$300.00
N. Platte #2110 : \$223.72
Scottsbluff #1064 : \$131.50

Largest Per Member by Chapters

Hastings #0362 : \$7.94
Scottsbluff #1064 : \$7.69
N. Platte #2110 : \$7.21
Gr. Island #1370 : \$5.15
Lincoln #0199 : \$2.94
Omaha #0144 : \$2.71
Omaha #13740 : \$1.56

Please check your donations if they are the same as above. I had one NARFE member give directly to National Office. It is the best to mail me the checks to me. Please inform your members not to mail their donation directly.

It has been an honor to serve you as Nebraska Federation ALZ co-ordinator.

Alzheimer's Disease Facts.....

Alzheimer's disease is the 6th leading cause of death in the United States. 16.1 million Americans provide unpaid care for people with Alzheimer's or other dementias. The caregivers provided an estimated 18.4 billion hours of care valued at over \$232 billion. Between 2000 and 2015 deaths from heart disease have decreased by 11% while deaths from Alzheimer's disease have increased by 123%. One in 3 seniors dies with Alzheimer's or another dementia. Early and accurate diagnosis could save up to \$7.9 Trillion in medical and care costs.

Every penny collected for Alzheimer's Fund is donated to research. No administration cost is used from your dollars collected.

Bob Voboril
Federation ALZ Coordinator

Notes from the District 3 Representative

Welcome to Spring 2019! Well eventually Mother Nature will let it be spring.

I want to send kudos out to the North Platte Chapter for the efforts being made to recruit and retain members. Efforts have been made to reach out to those who have let their membership lapse and to prospective members. The meetings have become better organized and interesting speakers have been invited to further our knowledge of different organizations and causes in and around North Platte. North Platte police department with the primary topic of scams on phones and internet. The Connection with a quick over view of services but the main topic was mentoring. Casa with being a volunteer advocate for the children. Thank you to Carol Wilson for keeping the minutes of the meetings and keeping track of our funds. Sharon Riley we appreciate your meeting reminder messages and helping find speakers for the meetings. Thanks to the president Roger Eggleston for working toward keeping our meetings better organized.

As 2019 progresses, we all need to be diligent about supporting our NARFE national leaders as they strive to protect our benefits.

Beth Fries
District 3 Representative

Federation Officers

Ron Moore, President	308-632-3023
Alice Stevens, Vice President	308-384-1634
Nancy Stenger, Secretary	402-834-0338
Janna Cornelius, Treasurer	308-379-0405
George Swanson, Service Officer	402-292-1156
Bob Voboril, Alzheimer's Chair	402-564-3344
Bob Voboril, Historian	402-564-3344
Pam Swanson PAC Coordinator	402-292-1156
Arthur Christianson, District #1 Rep	402-421-8494 (for chapters 0144, 0199, 1370)
Dennis Kamprath, District #2 Rep	308-384-3294 (for chapters 0366, 1509)
Beth Fries, District #3 Rep	308-539-1672 (for chapters 1064, 1717, 2110)