

NARFE
FEDERAL BENEFITS EXPERTS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
except July & August



**NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES
ASSOCIATION, BREMERTON CHAPTER 181**

P.O. Box 4514, Bremerton, WA 98312-0392

November 2023

NUMBER 09-23

General Meeting Date: November 13, 2023 Time: 1:00PM
Health Fair: 10:00AM – 1:00PM

**Meeting Place: Westside Improvement Club, 4109 West “E”
Street, Bremerton, WA**

**Program: The Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan Reps
Will Provide an Overview of Their Plans**

*NARFE is recognized as the association devoted exclusively to serving and
protecting the earned entitlements, rights and benefits of all federal retirees,
employees and survivors.*

**Executive Board meetings are held from noon to 2:00PM at the Westside
Improvement Club the Wednesday prior to general meetings. Members
are welcome to join us.**

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 11 December..... Holiday Luncheon
at Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie 192**
- 8 January.....Membership Meeting**
- 12 February.....Membership Meeting**
- 11 March.....Membership Meeting**
- 8 April.....Membership Meeting**

PRESIDENT

Bill Powers

November is the Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) program month. The first of three health fairs will be Wednesday, 1 November from 7:00AM to 5:00PM in downtown Bremerton at the Kitsap Conference Center on Washington Ave. It is a walk-in setup, arranged so shipyard workers can leave their job site throughout the day and visit health care representatives to get brochures and questions answered by experts. Retirees and survivor annuitants are also welcome but parking is limited. Our Chapter 0181 will staff a table at this event so, if you attend, stop by and say "hello".

The second event is an open-house on Saturday, 4 November from 9:00AM to 1:00PM at the Silverdale Beach Hotel on Bucklin Hill Road. This event requires an RSVP so, if you plan to attend, call 425-381-8523.

The third event is our annual health fair on Monday, 13 November from 10:00AM to 1:00PM at the Westside Improvement Club off National Avenue. This one is mainly for retirees and survivor annuitants, though current federal employees are always welcome. There is plenty of parking and the health fair is followed by our regular monthly chapter meeting during which each health care representative will give a short talk and answer further questions from 1:00PM to 1:30PM.

One item of concern is prescription drug coverage for those people not eligible or on Medicare Part D. The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 capped certain drug prices, e.g., insulin at \$35.00 per month, for those on Medicare. Those not eligible or not on Medicare and taking these drugs should question your FEHB provider to determine if they included this benefit in their 2024 insurance coverage.

If you are planning to change your health benefit plan, open season runs from 13 November through 11 December, 2023.

We are taking reservations for our annual Chapter 0181 Holiday Luncheon to be held on 11 December at 1:00PM. It will be at **Eagles Aerie 192 located at 2122 Sheridan Road NE in East Bremerton.**

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

President cont. The cost is \$18.50 per person which includes dessert and gratuity. The selection is either roast beef or salmon (see page 3 for full menu). **Contact John Burch BY 27 NOVEMBER** either at 360-377-7784 or during our 13 November membership meeting. We invited Mayor Wheeler as our speaker and made reservations for at least thirty people, so bring your significant other.

We are installing officers for the 2024/2025 election cycle at the Holiday Luncheon. There were no nominations from the floor at the October membership meeting so, unless there are nominations from the floor at our November meeting, we will elect our present slate of officers by acclamation. I am noting that our treasurer is requesting retirement. If you are inclined to give the office of treasurer a try for two years, please let John Burch or Ralph Petersen know and they will nominate you for our treasurer position.

We had a successful Alzheimer's Walk and rummage sale in October. See page 3 for donation status

COLA UPDATE

Steve Ferguson

The numbers are in. The COLA will be 3.2 percent for CSRS retirees and Social Security. The FERS "diet" COLA will be 2.2 percent.

NOVEMBER LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Bill Powers

Representative Mike Johnson (R-LA) has been elected Speaker of the House of Representatives. Johnson is a relatively unknown 51-year-old conservative Republican serving his fourth term as representative of Louisiana's 4th Congressional District. He represents one of the poorest congressional districts in America according to US Census data. He is an ally of former president Donald Trump and opposed certification of the 2020 presidential election. He voted against Ukraine support but is a strong supporter of Israel.

Johnson realizes that the 17 November deadline for passage of all 11 appropriations bills to avert a partial government shutdown is a tall order. He floated a stopgap measure (continuing resolution) to avert a shutdown, the very

move that sparked McCarthy's ouster. He floated 15 January 2024 as a new deadline for passage of all appropriations bills. So far there has been no kickback.

Johnson is one of the authors of the "Republican Study Committee 2024 Budget". This budget addresses our federal spending and balances our budget in seven years plus cuts spending by \$16 trillion over ten years. To show how this FY24 budget proposal would affect federal employees, go to pages 109, 110, & 111 of this proposal. The PDF is on-line at:

https://hern.house.gov/uploadedfiles/202306141135_fy24_rsc_budget_print_final_c.pdf

Basically, this proposal revises paid leave policies, eliminates automatic step increases, revises federal employees' pension plans including reducing COLAs for FERS & CSRS, reforms the interest rate on the Thrift Savings Plan G fund, increases the employee portion of costs for healthcare, and implements the chained consumer price index.

I do not think these items will be implemented due to our divided government but there are a few items in this proposed budget not listed above that will probably be implemented. America's debt is unsustainable at its present rate so Congress has to eventually quit kicking the can down the road. That is the message of the Republican Freedom Caucus that caused all the uproar for the last month.

MEMBERSHIP & MUSINGS

V. P. Ralph Sanders

I would like to start with a positive legislative note. The House of Representatives elected a speaker on 25 October. This will allow the House to start working on the 2024 budget. We should note that all spending bills must start in the House, that is the rule. Remember that the 2024 budget runs from 1 October 2023, to 30 September 2024. The federal government is presently operating on a 47-day continuing resolution that extends the 2023 budget spending levels to 17 November when this resolution expires. We should assume that there is still work to be done on the 2024 budget, but how much work and how long it will take to finish is anyone's guess.

Now we will get on with our membership report. Bremerton Chapter 0181 now has 396 members on its register. One member, Margaret Lentz, was reported as deceased this month. Our condolences to her family.

We have three new members: Tim Boom, Jeffrey Green and Janice McCarry. We welcome you aboard and hope to see you at a meeting. Virginia Julian reinstated her membership; thank you very much. Thirteen members renewed their membership for another year or multiple years. Thank you for what you do for NARFE. Because of you we can help federal employees and retirees everywhere.

If anyone has any questions regarding NARFE or Bremerton Chapter 0181, please feel free to contact any of the board members listed on the back page of this newsletter.

Editors Note: On 19 October, Congressman Derek Kilmer reintroduced the Federal Retirement Fairness Act, H.R. 5995. This is the legislation to allow civilian service in a temporary position after December 31, 1988 to be creditable service under the Federal Employees Retirement System. It has seven co-sponsors; go to www.congress.gov and search the bill number to follow its progress.

PROGRAMS

Secretary Bea Bull

13 NOVEMBER – NARFE health fair with FEHB plan reps and election of officers. Nominees are:

President – Bill Powers

Vice President – Ralph Sanders

Secretary – Bea Bull

Treasurer – Rex Tauscher

Executive Board Member – Stan Barber

Executive Board Member – John Burch

11 DECEMBER – Holiday Luncheon at the Eagles Aerie 192, 2122 Sheridan Road NE in East Bremerton. Contact John Burch at 360-377-7784 to make your reservation and arrange pre-payment of \$18.50 per person. See menu next page.

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED BY 27 NOVEMBER!

HOLIDAY LUNCHEON MENU

Both entrees served with green salad with vinaigrette dressing, dinner roll and dessert.

Roast beef with buttery garlic mashed potatoes and gravy

OR

Freshly caught Northwest salmon with a rice pilaf

8 JANUARY – A speaker from Abraham’s House.

12 FEBRUARY – A speaker from Western Washington University Poulsbo Campus cyber farm.

SECRETARY

Bea Bull

Minimum Wage Increase – The Washington State minimum wage will increase to \$16.28 per hour in 2024, up from \$15.74 in 2023.

2023 Fall Membership Drive – NARFE kicked off this event on 1 September and it will end on 31 December. Current members can earn \$10.00 for each new member they recruit, as well as other prizes. See pg. 6 of the October *NARFE Magazine*.

If you need NARFE Application/Brochures, let me know. I always have recruiting packets at the meetings but can also mail you a few applications to have on hand should a recruiting opportunity arise.

TREASURER

Rex Tauscher

Our account balances for August were \$18,378.27 and for September balances were \$18,347.49, for a decrease of \$30.78. Checks written and not cleared total

\$710.00. Life Membership Trust account value year to date has dropped \$0.17 per share for value change of minus \$305.91.

Our net worth as of 30 September was \$33,903.41. A Treasurer's report for October 2023 will be available at our November 2023 meetings.

ALZHEIMER'S CHAIR

Secretary Bea Bull

Alzheimer's donations were received from Stan and Lois Barber (October meeting), John Burch and Rex Tauscher (Alzheimer's Walk) and \$112.80 from the rummage sale. We thank everyone for your donations.

We're sad to announce that Lorie Bennett has stepped down from the federation Alzheimer's Coordinator position. Please mail all checks directly to the Alzheimer's Association at the address below.

To make a tax deductible donation to the NARFE Alzheimer's Research fund please make your check payable to "NARFE Alzheimer's Research", write Chapter 181 on the notation line, and mail it to:

**Alzheimer's Association
225 N Michigan Ave, 17th Floor
Chicago, IL 60601-7633**

SUNSHINE CHAIR

Lois Barber

A "speedy recovery" card was sent to Rolf Reichel and a "thinking of you" card was sent to Steve Furguson.

If you know of a chapter member in need of a little sunshine, please contact Lois at 360-297-2671 so she can get a card out to them.

If you have questions or need assistance with this newsletter, please feel free to contact me at tbkbull@gmail.com. Thanks!! Bea Bull

PRESIDENT

Bill Powers 360-377-7917
powersw@silverlink.net

**VICE PRESIDENT
MEMBERSHIP CHAIR**

Ralph Sanders

**SECRETARY
NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

Bea Bull

TREASURER

Rex Tauscher

LEGISLATIVE-NATIONAL

Vacant

LEGISLATIVE-STATE

Lyn Damshen

NARFE-PAC CHAIR

Lanny Ross

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William Fuhrmeister

SUNSHINE CHAIR

Lois Barber

WSF SERVICE OFFICER

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EX BD MEMBERS

UNTIL DECEMBER 2023

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John Burch

UNTIL DECEMBER 2024

Ralph Petersen

Lanny Ross

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NARFE DIST IV WEBSITE

Webmaster – Bea Bull
www.narfewadistiv.org

CHAPTER FACEBOOK PAGE

<https://www.facebook.com/narfechap181>

NARFE STATE WEBSITE

www.narfewa.org

NARFE NATIONAL WEBSITE

www.narfe.org

LEGISLATIVE HOTLINE

877-217-8234

**ADD YOUR E-MAIL
ADDRESS**

800-456-8410

**OFFICE OF PERSONNEL
MANAGEMENT(OPM)**

Phone: 1-888-767-6738

Hours of operation:

7:30AM – 7:45PM ET with best
time to reach someone being
6:30PM – 7:30PM or at 7:30AM.

Mailing Address:

Office of Personnel Management
Retirement Operations Center
P.O. Box 45
Boyers, PA 16017

**OUR ELECTED
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Senator Patty Murray

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**SENIOR INFORMATION &
ASSISTANCE**

360-337-5700 OR
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**OUR ELECTED
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