



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
except July & August

**NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES  
ASSOCIATION, BREMERTON CHAPTER 181**  
P.O. Box 4514, Bremerton, WA 98312-0392

**January 2024**

**NUMBER 01-24**

**General Meeting Date & Time: January 8, 2024 1:00PM**

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

**Program: Kristina Munger, Executive Director and Founder of Abraham's House,  
Will Tell Us About This Charity Organization**

*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**

**12 February.....Membership Meeting**

**11 March.....Membership Meeting**



**PRESIDENT**

Bill Powers

New Year's is a special time in everyone's life. It is a time to reflect on days past, reminisce about the good times and long friendships with a drink together 'for auld lang syne'. With that said, Congress has let a fiscal year and a calendar year pass without passing a budget. They did get the National Defense Authorization Act passed for another year with a 5.2 percent pay raise for the troops. This 118<sup>th</sup> Congress has passed 25 bills into law versus the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress' 81 bills for the same period of time, halfway through their biennium.

I think both sides of the House dysfunction have a legitimate argument for their cases. The Republicans highlight the crisis at the southern border, crime, and the high cost of living. The Democrats highlight chaos in the House leadership, the Ukraine war funding, and the Israeli/Palestine conflict funding. They need to get together and compromise because much bigger problems are on the horizon. The national debt and deficit spending are getting

ridiculous, plus China just announced that they intend to retake Taiwan.

In local news, we had a successful Holiday Luncheon. Though we didn't get the 30 attendees we were hoping for, we did get 26. Bremerton Mayor Greg Wheeler gave a good presentation about the city and put emphasis on solving the homeless problem. The City Council, as of publication, hasn't okayed his plan, but it looks like this plan will work for the anticipated number of occupants. The facility needs to be ready by May to avoid a tent city on downtown sidewalks again.

As for the Federal Reserve, it looks like they got extremely lucky. They left interest rates too low for too long creating inflation. Then they hit the brakes hard, raising the prime interest rate to between 5.25 and 5.5 percent to halt inflation. They want inflation to decrease down to 2 percent per year. It isn't there yet but their rapid interest rate increase is still taking effect while avoiding a recession. They announced in December that they may have three downward adjustments in their Federal Reserve prime interest rate in 2024. This announcement put the stock market on an upward tear with most of the indexes hitting new all-time highs.

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**CORRECTION!!  
The wrong calendar was used in the December insert. All membership meetings start at 1:00PM. Your editor regrets this error.**

**MOVING? SNOWBIRDS?**  
Even if it's from one apartment to another in the same building or complex, please contact Ralph Sanders at 360-535-4334 to update your mailing address!!! USPS charges a fee for returned newsletters. THANK YOU!!

### President cont.

On the bright side, daylight hours increase two minutes per day in the month of January. By 20 February daylight hours will speed up to three minutes more per day. Happy New Year and, as Oprah Winfrey said, "Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right."

### **CSRS vs. FERS**

Doug Rushton, Legislative Coordinator  
National Legislation  
Washington State Federation

I've been asked to research why NARFE supports H.R. 866 when, at the time the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) was implemented, there was an agreement that the lower cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for FERS retirees would be offset by gaining Social Security and employer-match contributions to their Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) accounts.

H.R. 866, the Equal COLA Act, revises the formula calculating the COLA for annuities paid under FERS. It proposes "parity between the cost-of-living adjustment with respect to an annuity under the Federal Employees Retirement System and an annuity under the Civil Service Retirement System, and for other purposes." The bill was sponsored by Representative Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA) and has, as of 7 December 2023, 44 cosponsors, with Representative Derek Kilmer (D-WA) being the only cosponsor from Washington. It was referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability on 8 February 2023. As of 4 December 2023, no related bill information has been received for H.R. 866. The bill, if passed, would provide FERS retirees with the same annual COLA as CSRS retirees.

The Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), a long-established pension plan that went into effect on 1 August 1920, has a single component – the annuity, whereas FERS, which became effective on 1 January 1987, has three components – 1) Reduced annuity (reduced from the level of CSRS), 2) Social Security, and 3) the Thrift Savings Plan. The annuity and reduced COLAs are a result of negotiations since FERS recipients would be eligible for Social Security (which CSRS retirees are not), as well as benefiting from yields from their TSP accounts. A person's individual savings and investments could supplement both a CSRS or FERS annuity. John Hatton, NARFE Staff Vice President, Policy and Programs, accurately points out many chose CSRS and prefer it. Without archival research, John is sure NARFE commented on and was involved with the development of FERS in the 1980s.

So, how did we get here – where FERS retirees are losing ground? When FERS was negotiated, there was a balancing of pros and cons – trying to make the best of an imperfect situation. FERS was supposed to create a similar total benefit to CSRS through the TSP, a smaller annuity and Social Security. Again, the underlying premise was to have FERS at parity with cost of living. NARFE did not wholly support the approach but had to take the whole package and, as we have seen, high inflation has diminished the FERS benefit. It appears the assumptions about the rate of inflation were too low.

It is for this reason that NARFE supports H.R. 866 and asks members to urge their congressional representatives to cosponsor this legislation.

As a FERS retiree myself, every time there is a COLA, the FERS COLA is less than the CSRS COLA, but the logic was (and is) that TSP yields and Social Security benefits would cover that difference.

***Editor's Note:** Doug posted this piece in the Washington community on FEDHub and it has initiated many conversations between members. That's what FEDHub is for: Sharing thoughts and experiences. If you haven't joined, go to [fedhub.narfe.org/quick-start-guide](https://fedhub.narfe.org/quick-start-guide) and become part of the conversation.*

### **MEMBERSHIP & MUSINGS**

V.P. Ralph Sanders

This will be the membership report for the period of 22 November to 22 December 2023. Bremerton Chapter 0181 now has 391 active members on its register. Two members passed away during this period: Sharon Eisenhardt and Mary Trudeau. Our condolences to the families of these members.

We had one member, Virginia Julian, reinstate her membership. Thank you very much for rejoining NARFE. There were nine members who renewed their membership during this period and we would like to thank them for their continued support over the years.

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

*As a reminder, your January annuity statement will show the COLA adjustment; in February it will show FEHB and FEDVIP plan premium adjustments.*

## PROGRAMS

Secretary Bea Bull

8 JANUARY – Kristina Munger, Executive Director and Founder of Abraham’s House. This charity, located at 312 N Callow Ave, assists people in need with clothing and household items.

12 FEBRUARY – Paul Haithcock from Western Washington University, Poulsbo Campus, to talk about their cyber farm where they build websites, then watch hackers try to access them to learn ways to prevent those hacks.

11 MARCH – March is NARFE-PAC month. WSF Legislative Coordinator Doug Rushton and Stephanie Hahn, Kitsap Outreach Representative, from Congressman Kilmer’s Bremerton office will join us.

8 APRIL – Interview with a local author. We will partner with Kitsap Regional Library Foundation who will interview Jonathan Evison, author of the novel, “The Revised Fundamentals of Caregiving.”

13 MAY – Melanie Magnenat from KidVantage will share what this local charitable organization does. We will participate in their “Diaper Derby” by asking members to bring a package of diapers to the meeting as a donation to KidVantage.

10 JUNE – Phil Cook, Kitsap County Assessor, will provide an update on significant changes to the Senior/Disabled persons exemption program for property taxes.

## SECRETARY

Bea Bull

**2024 Chapter Officers** – Elected in November and installed for a two-year term at the Holiday Luncheon by WSF Vice President Mary Traxler were:

President – Bill Powers  
Vice President – Ralph Sanders  
Secretary – Bea Bull  
Treasurer – Rex Tauscher  
Sergeant-at-Arms – Bill Fuhrmeister  
Executive Board Member – John Burch

Executive Board Member Stan Barber will be installed at the January meeting.

Please consider volunteering for the appointed position of Legislative Chair for national legislation.

**New Washington State Federation Website** – The federation webmaster has finished migrating to the new NARFE microsite. It has a clean new look. Take a moment to check it out.

<https://www.narfe.org/wa/>

**NARFE Wants Your Email Address** – The National membership department has asked us to help them update member contact information with phone numbers and email addresses. We have 30 members without phone numbers in the database and 171 members without email addresses. If you’re not receiving email from NARFE, please call 800-456-8410 option 1 and provide your email address.

## TREASURER

Rex Tauscher

Our account balances for October were \$17,967.81 and for November balances were \$18,558.87, for an increase of \$590.56. The Life Membership Trust account value as of 30 September 2023 dropped \$0.17 per share for a value change of minus \$305.91.

Our net worth as of 30 November was \$34,343.40. A Treasurer’s report for December 2023 will be available at our January 2024 meetings.

## ALZHEIMER’S CHAIR

Secretary Bea Bull

No Alzheimer’s donations were collected at the Holiday Luncheon. A donation check in the amount of \$815.82 was forwarded to the Alzheimer’s Association. Thank you to all members who donated this year.

We begin 2024 with a \$5.00 donation from Bea Bull for using the wrong calendar on the December newsletter insert; it is a chapter officer tradition to make an Alzheimer’s donation when we make a mistake.

**To make a tax-deductible donation to the NARFE Alzheimer’s Research fund please make your check payable to “NARFE Alzheimer’s Research”, write “Bremerton Chapter 181” on the notation line, and mail it to: Alzheimer’s Association  
225 N Michigan Ave, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Chicago, IL 60601-7633**

## SUNSHINE CHAIR

Lois Barber

No cards were sent out in December.

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.

<p><b>PRESIDENT</b> Bill Powers 360-377-7917 powersw@silverlink.net</p> <p><b>VICE PRESIDENT MEMBERSHIP CHAIR</b> Ralph Sanders</p> <p><b>SECRETARY NEWSLETTER EDITOR</b> Bea Bull</p> <p><b>TREASURER</b> Rex Tauscher</p> <p><b>LEGISLATIVE CHAIR-NATIONAL</b> Vacant</p>	<p><b>District III VP</b> Bea Bull 360-286-7798 tbkbull@gmail.com</p> <p><b>Region IX VP</b> Steven Roy 425-344-3926 stevenroy1@yahoo.com</p> <p><b>WSF SERVICE OFFICER</b> Charles Caughlan 360-693-0435 csquare@pacifier.com</p> <p><b>SENIOR INFORMATION &amp; ASSISTANCE</b> 360-337-5700 OR 1-800-562-6418</p>	<p><b>NARFE DISTRICT IV WEBSITE</b> Webmaster – Bea Bull www.narfewadistiv.org</p> <p><b>NARFE STATE WEBSITE</b> www.narfewa.org</p> <p><b>NARFE NATIONAL WEBSITE</b> www.narfe.org</p> <p><b>LEGISLATIVE HOTLINE</b> 877-217-8234</p> <p><b>ADD YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS</b> 800-456-8410</p>
<p><b>LEGISLATIVE CHAIR-STATE</b> Lyn Damschen</p> <p><b>NARFE-PAC CHAIR</b> Lanny Ross</p> <p><b>SERGEANT AT ARMS</b> William Fuhrmeister</p> <p><b>SUNSHINE CHAIR</b> Lois Barber</p> <p><b>EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS UNTIL DECEMBER 2024</b> Ralph Petersen Lanny Ross</p> <p><b>UNTIL DECEMBER 2025</b> Stan Barber John Burch</p>	<p><b>OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT (OPM)</b> Phone: 1-888-767-6738</p> <p>Hours of operation: 7:30AM – 7:45PM ET with best time to reach someone being 6:30PM – 7:30PM or at 7:30AM.</p> <p>Mailing Address: Office of Personnel Management Retirement Operations Center P.O. Box 45 Boyers, PA 16017</p> <p><b>CHAPTER FACEBOOK PAGE</b> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/narfechap181">https://www.facebook.com/narfechap181</a></p>	<p><b>OUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES</b></p> <p><b>Senator Patty Murray</b> 950 Pacific Avenue #650 Tacoma, WA 98402 Tacoma Phone Number 253-572-3636 D.C. Phone Number 202-224-2621 <a href="http://www.murray.senate.gov">www.murray.senate.gov</a></p> <p><b>Senator Maria Cantwell</b> 915 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Suite 3206 Seattle, WA 98174 Seattle Phone Number 206-220-6400 D.C. Phone Number 202-224-3441 <a href="http://www.cantwell.senate.gov">www.cantwell.senate.gov</a></p> <p>Congressional District 6 <b>Derek Kilmer</b> 345 – 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 500 Bremerton, WA 98337 Bremerton phone number 360-373-9725 D.C. phone number 202-225-5916 <a href="http://kilmer.house.gov">http://kilmer.house.gov</a></p> <p>Congressional District 10 <b>Marilyn Strickland</b> 6000 Main Street SW, Suite 3B Lakewood, WA 98499 No phone number listed <a href="https://strickland.house.gov">https://strickland.house.gov</a></p> <p>Lacey City Hall - 3rd Floor 420 College St SE, Suite 3000 Lacey, WA 98503 Lacey phone number 360-459-8514 D.C. phone number 202-225-9740</p>