



CHAPTER 236 SOUTH PUGET SOUND

CHAPTER MEETING DATE AT 12 NOON VIA ZOOM

21 May
16 July
15 October

Chapter website: [narfewardistiv.org/Olympia-chapter 236](http://narfewardistiv.org/Olympia-chapter%20236).

The ZOOM link: Meeting ID: 856 1177 7117

Passcode: 536226

We have a speaker for the May meeting. Katie Strozyk, the Opioid Response Coordinator for Thurston County Public Health will talk about the fentanyl overdose epidemic. This is certainly a most timely topic. We all should be more familiar with the issues involved. More than one grandparent has attended a funeral of a young family member who died from this drug.

President's Message – Tony Merola

NARFE continues to encounter numerous challenges to its existence with a steadily diminishing membership base. Our chapter officers have recently tried reaching out to you via phone or email, as a “welfare check” to see how all of you are doing, and to see if we can help you in any way. All of you are encouraged to drop in via our ZOOM meetings if only to say hello and hang around for a minute or two. We’d be glad to see you!

We continue to attract and recruit new members, whether active or retired federal employees, to keep our chapter alive and effective as advocates for our federal family. This task is daunting by observing all the winds of divisive change in Congress, as well as the interesting turbulence in this year’s presidential campaign as it gains steam and momentum. It is conceivable our status and benefits remain a target for Congress and for all those who demand cost controls, entitlement reform, and budget reconciliation to achieve some kind of deficit reduction.

Your chapter’s staff and the Washington State Federation continue to monitor these trends and import timely developments as they occur. I implore you to read the NARFE magazine from cover to cover. You will receive timely information on accurate reporting and analysis of legislation affecting benefits from NARFE’s legislative Department so you will know when threats arise and how to fight back. You will also receive answers to specific questions on benefits from NARFE experts to help you get the most out of your benefits as an employee or retiree.

Have an uneventful but safe and secure Spring!

Membership

Our chapter membership is 153. For the period from 1 February 24 to 26 April 24, 10 members renewed. We gained 4 new members, Deborah W [REDACTED] of Tumwater, C Ray D [REDACTED] of Olympia, Juliet L [REDACTED] of Shelton, and Jean H [REDACTED] of Tumwater. A hearty welcome to our new NARFE members. One member Ruth B [REDACTED] was reinstated. Four members were dropped for non-renewal. Five members were reported as having passed away, John M. B [REDACTED] of Eatonville, Darrell D. P [REDACTED] of Olympia, Deanna W [REDACTED] of Tacoma, Diana K [REDACTED] of Lacey, and Nance E T [REDACTED] of Olympia. Our condolences to their families.

Our chapter member numbers are holding steady. If you have the opportunity, promoting NARFE membership to an eligible friend or acquaintance is a desirable something to do. NARFE performs a vital role in advocating before Congress our interests as retirees and active federal workers. So, if you know someone who works or worked for the Feds, use your persuasive powers on them to join NARFE. Give them a NARFE magazine and show them the application for membership.

COLA UPDATE

The March CPI-W index value of 306.502 is a 1.7% increase from the third quarter 2023 average of 301.236.

Treasurers' Report

The December 31 balance is \$15,065.82. Your annual chapter membership fee is \$7. This is included in the NARFE's annual fee and is forwarded to our chapter by NARFE.

Alzheimer's

Forms to make contributions to Alzheimer's research are in every NARFE Magazine. Be sure you write our chapter number 236 on the memo line of your check and on the donation form. The NARFE magazine reports member donations to Alzheimer's research reached \$16 million in 2023. NARFE has funded critical research toward treatment, prevention and ultimately a cure. Give yourself a pat on the back.

Legislative

The House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security held a critical hearing on the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) on April 16, the second hearing on these issues. With 318 cosponsors for the bill to repeal WEP and GPO in the House, and continued committee attention. Momentum is building to address these longstanding issues. The hearing featured think tank witnesses rather than representatives of those directly impacted. NARFE president William Shackelford and National Secretary/Treasurer Kathryn Hensley attended the hearing in person and submitted written testimony for the record. NARFE continues to work with the lead sponsors of the repeal bill and other allies to press for further action on WEP and GPO.

The hearing focused on the significant and longstanding effects WEP/GPO have on federal retirees citing many examples of disproportionately affected public servants who experience undue hardships

from these provisions, unfairly reducing their retirement benefits they for years have paid into. Several witnesses acknowledged how these provisions harm public servants, identifying how the outdated formulas used to calculate the WEP and GPO create unfair outcomes for beneficiaries affected by one or both policies. Witnesses and committee members also discussed solutions that advocated for more modest reforms rather than a full repeal.

FEDCON 24

FEDCON 24 is NARFE's biennial training conference to further member's ability to advocate for protection of our benefits now and into the future. The Washing State Federation is offering scholarships of up to \$600 for members that would like to attend the conference. The conference this year is in St Louis, MO August 18 to 20. You can find all the details on the NARFE website at narfe.org. Click on FEDCON 24 and you will find all the information you need to know. Contact our Secretary Mary Traxler at maryt.traxler@gmail.com for information on the Federation's scholarship. This is a good opportunity to meet other members from around the country and discuss issues which are common to all.

NARFE-PAC NEWS

To support legislation beneficial to and oppose legislation contrary to the interests of Federal annuitants, NARFE-PAC protects members pay and benefits by raising and spending money to elect members of Congress who support the federal community. The NARFE PAC works for you by building strong relationships with lawmakers. The PAC is financed through members' direct, voluntary contributions to a separate fund. Federal law prohibits NARFE-PAC from soliciting contributions from anyone other than NARFE members and immediate family. Contributions from any other person are returned to them. Smart money is on NARFE-PAC! Support today! A contribution form is in the NARFE magazine. You can mail it in or better, visit www.narfe.org/narfe-pac to get started. Consider becoming a NARFE-PAC sustainer via credit card or annuity withholding.

To learn more about NARFE-PAC, go to www.narfe.org click on Advocacy and NARFE PAC and you can find information about who has received your contributions and data on how much individual Chapters and Federations have contributed. EVERY DOLLAR COUNTS!!

FEDERAL BENEFITS INSTITUTE

The Benefits Institute is a members-only resource designed to help members take charge of their federal benefits. NARFE experts aid members to resolve issues surrounding annuities, insurance, Medicare, Social Security and more. They, also several times a year, conduct a WEBINAIR on these issues. The next one is May 2nd at 2 pm ET, Key Emotional Questions You Need to Answer as You Approach Retirement Part 2. There was no Part 1 listed on the website. These web presentations are free to members, but you must register in advance. To do so, go to the NARFE website and click on Federal Benefits Institute. There is also an archive of past webinar's which can be viewed at any time.

Western Washington District Vice President – Bea Bull

Greeting Olympia/South Puget Sound chapter members! A few announcements:

- Public Service Recognition week is May 5–11, 2024 – please consider writing letters-to-the-editor thanking federal employees for their service. There’s a template on the NARFE National website Legislative Action Center that you can use; it will send your letter to all local newspapers
- The stand-alone 8.5 x 11 membership application has been revised to remove the “Bill Me” box. The F-135 member application/brochure is being revised so, until the new one is available, be sure to cross out the “Bill Me” option under “Payment Options”.
- Candidates are still needed for Region IX VP (contact Steve Roy at stevenroy1@yahoo.com) and federation president, vice president, secretary or treasurer (contact Cray Henry at wsf.Cray.Henry@gmail.com).
- Federation officer elections will be conducted this summer (check the federation website for updates www.narfe.org/wa/) and National elections will be held late August through 30 September (watch your *NARFE Magazine* for updates).
- The Region IX Symposium will be held October 24-26, 2024 at the Three Rivers Convention Center in Kennewick, Washington. For additional information about registration and reimbursement for attending, visit the federation website at www.narfe.org/wa/. (Our ad is on the inside back cover of the May *NARFE Magazine*.)

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