

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
except July & August

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

January 2026

NUMBER 01-26

General Meeting Date & Time: January 12, 2026 1:00PM

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

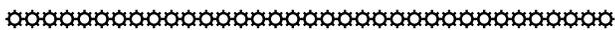
Program: Lauren Carroll, Program Manager – King & Kitsap Counties, Alzheimer's Association Washington State Chapter, Will Discuss Different Behaviors the Person Living with Dementia Can Present

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

- 9 February.....Membership Meeting**
- 9 March.....Membership Meeting**
- 13 April.....Membership Meeting**



PRESIDENT

Bill Powers

With daylight starting to get longer but winter weather approaching, Congress has another Continuing Resolution deadline approaching on 30 January. The good news for us, being a Navy town, is that the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for 2026 has passed Congress. It had bipartisan support and was signed by President Trump. However, Congress must still pass an appropriations bill to fund the \$901 billion in defense spending for 2026.

By executive order, President Trump finalized a 1 percent pay raise for General Service (GS) federal employees with no locality pay increase for 2026. The military will see a 3.8 percent pay raise as part of the above NDAA. Social Security and CSRS annuitants get a 2.8 percent Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) but FERS

annuitants will only get a 2 percent diet COLA₁ (see pg. 2).

Conflicting data will continue to temper these COLA boosts due to the government shutdown and elimination of staffing that analyze inflation data.

Our *NARFE Magazine* Bill Tracker has several House and Senate bills that I do not anticipate any action on in this 118th Congress. However, you are encouraged to keep up with support for federal employees affected by the legislation listed. You can do this by urging Congress to reassert its power given by the Constitution to check executive branch federal reorganization efforts. Call your congressional representative listed on the back of this newsletter or visit NARFE.org and click on Advocacy.

Also, as a result of the shutdown and government reorganization, OPM has been very busy processing retirement service claims. These individuals are good candidates for joining NARFE and our chapter if they are not already a member.

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MOVING? SNOWBIRDS?
Even if it's from one apartment to another in the same building or complex, please contact Bea at 360-286-7798 to update your mailing address!!! USPS charges a fee for returned newsletters. THANK YOU!!

President cont.

At our Holiday Luncheon we installed our chapter core officers for another two years and had a good presentation by Bremerton Mayor Wheeler who was re-elected for another four years.

Have a happy and healthy 2026.

H.R. 491/S.624 are pieces of legislation to alleviate the FERS COLA discrepancy. Representatives DelBene and Randall have cosponsored H.R. 491 and Senator Murray has cosponsored S.624. If you live in another Representative's district, please urge them to cosponsor H.R. 491. Everyone in Washington State should urge Senator Cantwell to cosponsor S.624.

Artificial Intelligence

President Powers

Amazon, Alphabet (Google), Microsoft, and Meta (Facebook) corporations are making significant investments in AI. Their projected expenditures for 2025 are a staggering \$364 billion. An estimated 92 percent of USA Gross Domestic Product growth in the first half of 2025 was driven by investment in data centers. Nvidia Corporation, mentioned in a previous newsletter, provides the graphics processing units that power AI development. The takeaway – these investments aren't just about algorithms; they are reshaping our economy and everyday way of life for communities nationwide. These corporations utilize these robust high-capacity data centers to serve as a hub for AI operations. Some have hundreds of thousands of servers that execute computational tasks utilizing fiber optic cabling, high speed 5G networking, solid state driver stowage, redundant power infrastructure, climate control, security measures, and disaster recovery strategies. The performance of most digital services such as streaming TV, social media, gaming, and email is contingent on efficient data centers. These data centers are setting the stage for breakthroughs in medicine, science, and other critical fields. Microsoft's Fairwater AI facility in Wisconsin takes up a 315-acre campus.

Building these datacenters depends on land, water, and power availability plus local politics. Over one third of Americans support a ban on construction of data centers in their communities. Meanwhile the Trump administration supports AI innovation and Silicone Valley is funding a \$100 million new Political Action Committee advocating for AI interests. Some of these datacenters use as much electricity as 400,000 electric cars. It is predicted that with this technology revolution, corporations will need thirty additional small scale nuclear power

reactors worldwide to generate the needed energy demand by 2030.

ChatGPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) is a chatbot that uses a software application designed by OpenAI to have textural and spoken conversations online using AI. It has been highly successful and credited with accelerating the AI boom, acquiring 100 million users in only two months. Simply amazing. It now is the fifth most visited website, Google Search being number one. However, a ChatGPT application takes ten times as much electricity usage as a traditional Google search. 'GPT-5 Plus' is OpenAI's latest software model that provides enhanced AI access for \$20 per month on their website, chat.openai.com. If interested, check it out and try it first for free.

Cautionary Note: Inform management if utilizing AI for routine reports, emails, and low-level tasks at work. It is always best to be transparent so management can implement safeguards.

More on WISeR

Secretary Bull

As discussed last month, WISeR stands for Wasteful and Inappropriate Service Reduction and will, according to the CMS.gov website, "...help protect American taxpayers by leveraging enhanced technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML), along with human clinical review, to ensure timely and appropriate Medicare payment for select items and services."

According to an article dated 15 December 2025 in *The Seattle Times* titled "[Murray pushes to halt federal pilot adding AI to Medicare approvals](#)" by Elise Takahama, the WISeR program will increase the number of items and services requiring pre-authorizations, which in turn may delay or deny needed medical treatments for patients.

Also, the third-party tech companies [Virtix Health will run Washington's pilot₂ (see pg. 3)] used to decide medical necessity will, according to the article, "have a financial incentive to deny care."

Senator Murray introduced S.3480 "A bill to prohibit the Secretary of Health and Human Services from implementing the WISeR model under the Medicare program" on 15 December 2025 and Senator Cantwell co-sponsored the same day.

In the House, companion legislation, H.R. 5940 "Seniors Deserve SMARTER Care Act of 2025" was introduced by Representative DelBene and has six

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WISer cont. Washington cosponsors: Larson, Randall, Jayapal, Schrier, Smith and Strickland.

Stateline, 4 December 2025, "[Medicare's new AI experiment sparks alarm among doctors, lawmakers](#)" by Anna Claire Vollers

MEMBERSHIP

Secretary Bull

As of 27 December we have 355 chapter members.

Two members, Judith [REDACTED] and Theodore [REDACTED], reinstated their membership – thank you! And we have three new members: Patricia [REDACTED], Thomas [REDACTED] and Kenneth [REDACTED]; welcome to Chapter 0181!

We thank all the prospective members who stopped by our table at the PSNS FEHB plan health fair!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chapter Bylaws Amendment: The revised bylaws were approved by NARFE National Secretary/Treasurer Blythe and are posted on the chapter's page on the district website.

Executive Board Member Steps Down: We are sad to announce Ralph [REDACTED] stepped down for health reasons. He will not be replaced at this time. Please update the chapter directory sent with the December newsletter.

FEDcon26: August 19-21, 2026 – Indianapolis, Indiana. For budget planning purposes, does anyone plan to attend this NARFE National conference? If so, please let Bea know (see back page for contact information).

Region IX Symposium: October 1-3, 2026 – Ellensburg, Washington. This is in the planning stages so, if you're interested in attending, stop by the event page on the federation website. The federation and chapter have funds budgeted to assist members in good standing who wish to attend. <https://www.narfe.org/region09/meetings-events/meetings/symposium2026/>

Federation Nominations and Elections: It's time again to elect federation officers. Three people are needed for the nominating committee; candidates need to volunteer or be nominated.

Are you interested in serving on the nominating committee? Or in running for federation president, vice president, secretary or treasurer? Or do you know someone who would be perfect for one of those positions? Please contact Bea (see back page for contact information).

PROGRAMS

9 February – Caitlin Newman – Program Supervisor Kitsap County Public Works Solid Waste Division – proper recycling

9 March – Annie Chatman – Kitsap Transit – ACCESS buses

13 April – Kitsap Regional Library Foundation – Meet Your Local Author event

TREASURER

Bea Bull and Rex Tauscher

Nov 1, 2025 Account Balance	\$65,106.52
Income	+498.46
Expenses	-591.50
Nov 30, 2025 Account Balance	\$65,013.48
USPS Bulk Mail Acct	+163.29
USPS Return Mail Acct	+117.08
TOTAL Net Worth Nov 30, 2025	\$65,293.85

The Chapter Life Membership Trust account has a continually fluctuating stock market share price. Its value will be updated and published at the end of each tax year. The 12/31/2024 value was \$16,213.31.

A treasurer's report for December 2025 will be available at our January meetings.

ALZHEIMER'S CHAIR

Secretary Bea Bull

There were no donations in December. A check in the amount of \$200.00 was forwarded to the Alzheimer's Association.

**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, 17th Floor
Chicago, IL 60601-7633**

SUNSHINE CHAIR

Lois Barber

A card was sent to the Elks thanking them for their excellent service hosting our holiday luncheon.

If you know of a chapter member in need of a little sunshine, please contact Lois at 360-297-2671.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

<p>PRESIDENT NARFE-PAC CHAIR Bill Powers 360-473-6301 powersw@silverlink.net</p> <p>VICE PRESIDENT Vacant</p> <p>SECRETARY/TREASURER NEWSLETTER EDITOR Bea Bull</p> <p>ASSISTANT TREASURER Rex Tauscher</p> <p>LEGISLATIVE CHAIR-NATIONAL Vacant</p> <p>LEGISLATIVE CHAIR-STATE Vacant</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP CHAIR Vacant</p> <p>SERGEANT AT ARMS William Fuhrmeister</p> <p>SUNSHINE CHAIR Lois Barber</p> <p>EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS UNTIL DECEMBER 2026 Rex Tauscher</p> <p>UNTIL DECEMBER 2027 Stan Barber John Burch</p>	<p>WESTERN WASHINGTON DISTRICT VP Bea Bull 360-286-7798 tbkbull@gmail.com</p> <p>REGION IX VP Steven Roy 425-344-3926 stevenroy1@yahoo.com</p> <p>WSF SERVICE OFFICER Charlie Caughlan 360-693-0435 csquare@pacifier.com</p> <p>NARFE NATIONAL WEBSITE www.narfe.org</p> <p>LEGISLATIVE HOTLINE 877-217-8234</p> <p>ADD YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS 800-456-8410</p> <p>NARFE STATE WEBSITE www.narfe.org/wa/</p> <p>NARFE DISTRICT WEBSITE Webmaster – Bea Bull www.narfewadistiv.org</p> <p>CHAPTER FACEBOOK PAGE https://www.facebook.com/narfechap181</p> <p>OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT (OPM) 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>SENIOR INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE 360-337-5700 OR 1-800-562-6418</p> <hr/> <p>OUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES</p> <p>Senator Patty Murray 950 Pacific Avenue #650 Tacoma, WA 98402 Tacoma Phone Number 253-572-3636 D.C. Phone Number 202-224-2621 www.murray.senate.gov</p> <p>Senator Maria Cantwell 915 – 2nd Avenue, Suite 3206 Seattle, WA 98174 Seattle Phone Number 206-220-6400 D.C. Phone Number 202-224-3441 www.cantwell.senate.gov</p> <p>Congressional District 6 Emily Randall 345 – 6th Street, Suite 500 Bremerton, WA 98337 360-373-9725</p> <p>1102 A St, Ste 326 Tacoma, WA 98402 253-272-3515</p> <p>D.C. phone number 202-225-5916 http://randall.house.gov</p> <p>Congressional District 10 Marilyn Strickland 6000 Main Street SW, Suite 3B Lakewood, WA 98499 No phone number listed</p> <p>Lacey City Hall - 3rd Floor 420 College St SE, Suite 3000 Lacey, WA 98503 360-459-8514</p> <p>D.C. phone number 202-225-9740 https://strickland.house.gov</p>
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