



# NARFE

## Coastal Sussex Chapter 1690



Volume 11 Issue 4

PO Box 390, Ocean View, DE 19970

April 2020



### Upcoming Dates

#### April 9

Monthly Chapter Luncheon Meeting  
1776 Restaurant

#### Midway Shopping Center

Rehoboth Beach  
**CANCELLED**

#### April 15

Tax Day (IRS)  
(EXTENDED TO  
JULY 15)

#### April 22

Earth Day

#### April 24

Arbor Day

#### April 30

Tax Day (Delaware)  
(EXTENSION?)

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## April Luncheon Meeting Cancelled

In view of government and public concerns over the spreading of the coronavirus, the Executive Board has decided to cancel the April 9<sup>th</sup> monthly chapter luncheon meeting, normally held at 1776 Restaurant in Rehoboth Beach. No decision has been made at the present time about the May meeting.

Chapter President Carl Bouchard issued the following statement:

“It is with regret that we are cancelling the April 9<sup>th</sup> chapter luncheon and membership meeting. Many organizations are cancelling or postponing gatherings until up to the end of April. Restaurants are closed for at least 2 weeks (including 1776 Restaurant) and some states have called for closures for up to 4 weeks. Many churches, including the Washington National Cathedral, have cancelled all services until after Easter. Many of us have even received cancellations from doctors’ offices rescheduling appointments until after April 30.

In view of these developments, it is best for the Chapter to not gather in a group luncheon environment at this time, and to exercise prudence and caution by cancelling our luncheon meeting. We will keep you informed as the situation changes.

Let us hope and pray that we are on the short end so that life can go back to normal. In the meantime, please stay safe and healthy.”

The 1776 Restaurant has been a reliable partner to our chapter for our monthly lunches. During this period of restaurant closures, they are open for takeout for lunch from 11:00 am to 2:30 pm, and dinner from 5 to 8 pm, with delivery available for a reasonable distance. Their telephone number is [\(302\) 645-9355](tel:3026459355). We encourage chapter members to patronize them by ordering takeout.

## Delaware Non-Profits Responding to Coronavirus Crisis

In a development of particular interest to Delaware residents, a group of Delaware’s philanthropic and nonprofit leaders have launched a coordinated response to the coronavirus crisis. They include: United Way of Delaware, the Delaware Community Foundation, the Delaware Alliance for Nonprofit Advancement, and Philanthropy Delaware.

The group of nonprofits said they will “coordinate with each other, and with other nonprofits, businesses, government agencies, and individuals to ensure a comprehensive response throughout the state.” They said the goal is “to align Delaware’s nonprofit community in a coordinated effort to alleviate the impact of the crisis in Delaware. We seek to do this by supplementing and supporting efforts of government, school systems and social service agencies, by generating funds and other support, and by recruiting volunteers to address both the immediate and long-term consequences of the COVID-19 crisis.”

If any Chapter 1690 members would like to know more about their work, ascertain available resources, or would like to volunteer or donate money, more information is available at <https://www.delcf.org/coronavirus/>

## NARFE-PAC Report

**Greg Neuner**

### *Chapter 1690 Supports NARFE-PAC*



In support of “NARFE-PAC Month” members at our March luncheon meeting contributed \$225 to the Political Action Committee. That brings the chapter’s total contributions for the 2019-2020 cycle to over \$2,500. We are well on our way to meeting our goal of \$4,000 by December 31, 2020.

NARFE uses PAC funds to contribute to the election campaigns of those in congress who support federal employees and retirees. We face budget proposals to reduce or eliminate pay increases for employees, increase retirement contributions while reducing retirement benefits, and reduce cost of living increases for current retirees. Every dollar contributed to NARFE-PAC helps us fight against enactment of these proposals. *(See the article below for a summary of key legislative initiatives that NARFE has been involved with.)*

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our PAC. Members who still want to contribute can do so at any monthly meeting or by using the mail-in form in each NARFE magazine.

## 2019 NARFE Legislative Achievements

NARFE reported a number of significant achievements in its lobbying efforts in 2019. Some highlights follow:

- NARFE played a leading role in blocking the administration’s misguided OPM reorganization plan, advancing important compromise language that both chambers of Congress supported. As a result of NARFE’s efforts, the president signed into law a bill that stopped the OPM reorganization plan from advancing at least until 180 days after a year-long study detailing the challenges facing OPM and recommending solutions.
- Thanks to NARFE’s hard work and the advocacy of its members, presidential budget proposals to eliminate or reduce cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for all current and future retirees were defeated; along with other proposals, the budget plan included over \$177 billion in cuts to benefits, none of which became law.
- NARFE worked tirelessly to pass a 3.1 percent average federal pay raise for 2020—a 2.6 percent across-the-board increase and a 0.5 percent average increase in locality rates. The raise, the largest in a decade, keeps pace with average private-sector increases and achieves parity with military salary increases.
- NARFE secured 12 weeks of paid parental leave for federal employees by working with a coalition of stakeholders and members of Congress.
- NARFE joined with congressional allies to pass into law the Government Employee Fair Treatment Act of 2019, which guarantees back pay for those furloughed during last year’s 35-day shutdown and those furloughed in all future government shutdowns.

## President's Column

Carl Bouchard

### Coronavirus Crisis:

Dammed if you do and dammed if you don't!

Every now and again, we end up having a crisis where everybody charges to the grocery stores for perceived necessities such as toilet paper, tissues, milk, and various and other sundry things. This current Coronavirus is an excellent example where common sense can go awry.

I have a friend whose daughter developed a high fever. In a panic when she could not find her fever thermometer, she went to the corner drug store to buy a new one. However, they were all out. She checked the bacterial wipe aisle and those shelves were empty, as were the toilet paper shelves. This is now called a pandemic but it does not need to be this intense for this hoarding phenomenon to exist.

Having been involved in public works in a previous life, we experienced this same phenomenon whenever a storm was forecast, be it snow or flood-yielding rains. People would panic and head out to the store to gather everything they thought they might need. At this same time, we were warning people to stay off the roads so the trucks could get the roads brined before the snow hit or where we were trying to get people to evacuate before they flooded and were trapped in their neighborhood. Several times we prepared for evacuations and the storm ended up being a non-storm. We were criticized for being overly cautious. Other times where we underestimated the storm's impact, we were criticized for not stressing the importance of the storm's impact. I see the same phenomenon happening with the COVID-19 virus.

Let us hope and pray it is over soon. I'm optimistic - and have already booked a trip to Russia. I would hate to have to cancel another trip for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row!

In the meantime, be careful. And follow the tips that health officials are providing. We have reprinted some of the CDC tips on page 8 of this newsletter.

Chapter 1690 Meetings: I want to thank the 28 member who attended the March meeting and learned all about the Inland Bays. Center Director **Doctor Susan Ball** had an excellent presentation prepared for us.

While we regret having to cancel the April meeting, I hope the crisis is over by the May meeting. We will be keeping close tabs on the situation as the weeks progress.

Advocacy: I am seeing more cooperation in Congress trying to cooperate to pass COVID-19 legislation than I have seen in a long time. That means the budget will probably not be discussed and that continuing resolutions will be the norm until the new Congress starts next year.

But we still need to be advocates for our existing benefits and block any attempts at chiseling away at those benefits. (See our NARFE-PAC and Legislative Report on page 2 of this newsletter.) We will keep you apprised of any attempts at changes.



## 2020 Officers

<b>President</b>	
Carl Bouchard	424-4425
<b>1st Vice-President</b>	
Larry Trombello	430-7689
<b>Secretary</b>	
Martha Justice	664-1231
<b>Treasurer</b>	
Jo Ann Teiken	616-2017
<b>Federation Treasurer</b>	
Jim Blakeslee	227-5306

## Members-at-Large

<b>2019-2020</b>	
Pat Brady-Rice	215-805-7782
<b>2020-2021</b>	
Linda Berwick	436-4261
Maria Ryan	537-1117

## Nominating Committee

<b>2019-2020</b>	
Vinnie Rice	215-805-7783

## Committee Chairs

<b>Alzheimer's</b>	
Lisa Botluk	443-852-0043
<b>Chaplain</b>	
Theresa Pitman	539-5280
<b>Membership</b>	
Ron & Carol Weber	829-8906
<b>NARFE-PAC</b>	
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<b>Service Officer</b>	
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Cece Niemi	
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<b>50/50 Raffle</b>	
Vinny Rice	215-805-7783

## Alzheimer's Report

Lisa Botluk

The Alzheimer's Association has released a special album - "Music Moments," – with the theme of “inspiring hope through song.” It is free - and features award-winning artists such as Sting, Jason Isbell, Anthony Hamilton, and Joan Jett coming together for a collection of new recordings and unreleased tracks.

These songs and video vignettes “honor the personal, emotional connection between music and the most important moments in life that we never want to lose.”

"Music Moments" shares songs and stories from some of our favorite artists. Each track is paired with behind-the-scenes videos and personal stories connected to the songs they selected.

You can listen to and download the “Music Moments” album at <https://alz.org/musicmoments>



## Federation Report

Carl Bouchard

*I attended the March 2020 NARFE Delaware Federation meeting, along with representatives of the other four Delaware chapters. The following is a potpourri of notes from the meeting.*

June 1 and 2 training session in York, PA: There are still spaces available if any Chapter 1690 members would like to attend. The registration site is at <https://mdnarfe.org/>. Reservations need to be received by May 16. Registration is \$99, and the Federation and the Chapter will both be contributing to the attendance costs of our members attending. Our own service officer, **Mike Buso**, will be a presenter for a discussion about the role of chapter service officers. The program is still fluid, but NARFE National President Ken Thomas and NARFE National Executive Director Barb Sido are scheduled to attend.

The FEDCON20 Conference is August 30-September 1 in Scottsdale, AZ and the Federation will also subsidize this event for attendees.

A NARFE 100<sup>th</sup> Gala celebration will be held in Washington D.C. on June 21<sup>st</sup> at the Hyatt Regency. More to come.

March was “PAC month” for NARFE. Federation NARFE-PAC chair Mark Oliver reported that at the national level, NARFE has collected over \$1 million in PAC funds, and to date, distributed \$600,000 to candidates. NARFE-PAC does not accept Chapter and Federation Checks, but our chapter 1690 NARFE-PAC officer, **Greg Neuner**, will bundle the checks he received at our chapter luncheon (see article on page 2) and send them on to NARFE headquarters to be part of the national NARFE totals. All members should have received a recent letter requesting your participation.

The NARFE photo contest has an April 7 deadline date for submission of photos taken by members.

By-Law revisions had been initially completed for the National By-Laws, but they will be redone to include a future dues increase. Revision of federation – and then chapter – By-Laws will await completion of the national By-Laws.

Membership numbers for the Delaware Federation are 629 Chapter Members and 405 National Members, for a total of 1,034. Of these numbers, our chapter 1690 accounts for 280 Chapter and 165 National Members.

## Social Report

Jo Ann Teiken

Twenty -eight chapter members attended our March 12th luncheon at 1776 Restaurant. **Dr. Susan Ball**, Chair of the Delaware Center for the Inland Bays was our speaker. *(See article below)*.

She informed our group about the work being done to "preserve, protect and restore" the great natural resources in our great state of Delaware. Dr. Ball is a long-time nature lover and said she decided to volunteer her services "to help preserve the inland bays."

As you saw in the notice on page 1, our April 9<sup>th</sup> meeting had to be cancelled because of restrictions due to the coronavirus situation. We hope we can hold the May luncheon. We will provide more details in the May chapter newsletter.

## Center for the Inland Bays Report at March Meeting

**Dr. Susan Ball**, Chairman of the Board for the Center for the Inland Bays was the featured speaker at our March chapter luncheon meeting. She gave a slide presentation on the work of the Center and the ecological state of the bays



The Center is one of 28 National Estuary Programs established by congress. It receives federal funding from the Environmental Protection Agency, state funding from DNREC and support from voluntary contributions. Dr. Ball said the mission of the Center is to preserve, protect and restore Delaware's inland bays, the water that flows into them, and the watershed around them. She said the bays have about 300 square miles of watershed surrounding them.

Dr. Ball cited a number of statistics from a 2016 report about the health of our bays. She said water quality has benefited from decreased agricultural pollution and increased inland flushing. However, with growth throughout Sussex County, there has been an increase in acreage of impervious surfaces like roofs, roads, driveways, and parking lots. Water from those surfaces ends up in the bays and affects water quality. Home lawn fertilizers, septic tanks and pet waste are also problems for the bays. She said you can swim in certain parts of the bay as long as you rinse off afterwards, but she said that most creeks are not safe for swimming.

Dr. Ball described the Center's oyster gardening program and oyster shell recycling program, two important initiatives to improve water quality. The center collects oyster shells from local restaurants and deposits them in the bays to create reefs to support growth of new oysters. The new oysters then filter the water and improve water quality. A single oyster can filter up to 50 gallons of water each day. Dewey Select Oysters in local restaurants are harvested from our inland bays.

To support the Center, Dr. Ball said, "Eat oysters and volunteer."

### **NARFE RENEWAL REMINDER – WRITE IN CHAPTER 1690**

Whenever you renew your NARFE membership during the year, please remember to indicate clearly that you are a member of, and want to renew your membership in, Coastal Sussex Chapter 1690.

*Help us keep our local membership strong!*

## Federal Employees Telecommuting Due to the Coronavirus

*Federal retirees may be interested in Federal Times reports that in March, as the news of the seriousness of the coronavirus were circulating, the government was looking to increasing teleworking by federal workers as a workplace alternative. Excerpts from the Federal Times article follow:*

“The Office of Management and Budget is encouraging agencies to maximize the telework available to employees that are most at risk of getting sick. More federal employees are likely to be placed on telework or sent home on leave due to coronavirus spread.

“The Office of Management and Budget sent a memorandum to heads of agencies March 12 that instructed those agencies to maximize telework availability to employees that are in at-risk populations for severe cases of coronavirus, as per Centers for Disease Control guidance.

“Acting OMB Director Russell Vought wrote in the memo. “These CDC-identified populations include older adults and individuals who have chronic health conditions, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, lung disease or compromised immune systems. Agencies do not need to require certification by a medical professional and may accept self-identification by employees that they are in one of these populations.”

“The memo also encouraged agencies to approve safety-based leave for at risk individuals that cannot telework. Vought also wrote, ‘Additionally, agencies are encouraged to consult with local public health officials and the CDC about whether to extend telework flexibilities more broadly to all eligible teleworkers in areas in which either such local officials or the CDC have determined there is community spread.’ In addition, the Office of Personnel Management encouraged agencies to prioritize telework as part of their continuity of operations plans.

The article further stated: “Agencies are also encouraged to extend telework flexibilities more broadly to accommodate state and local responses to the outbreak, including, but not limited to, school closures.”

*Federal Times* noted the possibility that Coronavirus could force the federal government to mandate telework, but it raised the question: “Will IT infrastructure be prepared?”

*The Federal Times* article also made an interesting observation about risk factors involving the average age of federal employees. Further excerpts follow:

“Even looking at the most straight-forward attribute that puts someone at risk, which is age, federal employees are likely to be impacted in far higher numbers than the general population.

“According to March 2019 federal employment data, the most recent to be released by the Office of Personnel Management, nearly 30 percent of the federal workforce is over 55. Only 25 percent of the general U.S. workforce is in that demographic, according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.”

## IN MEMORIAM

We are saddened by the recent passing away of a loyal and longtime chapter member **Kathleen Lagore**.

Kathleen resided in Ocean View, where she had moved after a career of 28 years in a Philadelphia Social Security District Office. A regular attendee of Chapter 1690 functions, she was currently serving a term as Member-at-Large on the Executive Board. From 2015-2017, she served as Chapter Secretary, and previously had served as Delaware Federation Secretary. She had also served on committees at two NARFE National Conventions. Outside NARFE, she was a volunteer with the Mid-Atlantic Symphony.

Everyone loved her outgoing personality and the good cheer she spread among members at Executive Committee and Luncheon Meetings alike. Her sense of humor and laugh was infectious. Her presence will be sorely missed.

### Sunshine Report

CeCe Niemi



In March, condolences were sent to the family of Joseph Borek on his passing away.

### Volunteer Opportunities at Milton Food Pantry

Ken Sosne

*Your NARFE Chapter newsletter always welcomes comments, suggestions, and interesting tidbits from chapter members. This month, **Ken Sosne**, who retired from HHS, sent in this item about the work of the Milton Community Food Pantry, and about the importance of volunteer activity by federal retirees.*

The Milton Community Food Pantry (MCFP), located at 114 Federal Street in Milton, DE distributes food for families on Mondays from 10 am to 12 noon every week during the year. As an all-volunteer organization, it is always looking for help in packing and distributing food, food rescue, and other support. I have been volunteering at the Pantry since April 2019 in a Development Adviser role as well as doing food rescue.

The largest need at this time is food rescue, which entails visiting selected food establishments, picking up food products, and delivering them to the Pantry. As our need for support grows, so too does the need for food rescue.

As a retired federal employee or a new retiree looking to do something especially rewarding while helping your community, please consider joining us at the MCFP. We are not looking for a large commitment. Once or twice a month to pick up and rescue food would be very helpful. If you could do more, even better. You can reach the Pantry through their website at [www.miltonpantry.org](http://www.miltonpantry.org), or feel free to contact me at [ksosne@yahoo.com](mailto:ksosne@yahoo.com)

Of course, the Milton Food Pantry is only one of many organizations that can benefit from our expertise and experience from having worked in the federal service. The Pantry would like to have your help but if not there, please consider volunteering for some other nonprofit organization.

It is the service we were called to do, and can continue, and I can personally say, "It is some of the most rewarding work one can do."



# NARFE

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

*Coastal Sussex Chapter 1690*

PO Box 390

Ocean View, DE 19970

[www.narfed.org](http://www.narfed.org)



## April 2020 Newsletter

### CDC Tips

*While many of us have already seen and are utilizing various safe practice tips to reduce the chance of contracting coronavirus, it never hurts to repeat them again. Here are some tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).*

Handwashing, Handwashing, and Handwashing. The CDC says that regular handwashing is critical, particularly after you use the bathroom, before you eat, and after you blow your nose, cough, or sneeze. Use soap and scrub for at least 20 seconds. (You know, Happy Birthday twice!)

Wiping surfaces. In your home, regularly clean frequently touched surfaces (like doorknobs, handles, toilet levers, faucet handles, hairdryers, and counters), electronic devices (like keypads, remotes, and telephones), and light switches (wall switches and lamps),

Public sanitizing: Clean your hands with a hand sanitizer (containing at least 60 percent alcohol) after being in crowded spaces or after touching surfaces in public areas (such as grocery carts, gas pump handles, restaurant menus, and so forth.) Utilize the wipes that many stores now provide at their entrances.

Avoid face contact: Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. If you have to cough or sneeze, use a tissue or cough into the crook of your elbow—and clean your hands right afterwards.

Be careful who you are next to: Try to avoid people who may be coughing, sneezing, or ill.