

NARFE

Coastal Sussex Chapter 1690



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PO Box 390, Ocean View, DE 19970

May 2020



May Luncheon Meeting Cancelled

With the Delaware “Stay-at-Home” directives still very much in place, it will come as no surprise to chapter members that we will not be holding our scheduled May 14 luncheon meeting at 1776 Steakhouse.

While it would be a nice idea in theory to be able to construct some kind of virtual or online Chapter meeting, the technical requirements to put something like that together are too daunting for us to even attempt. (We would wager that very few - if any - of us retirees had even heard of Zoom until now!)

We had interesting speakers lined up for our spring meetings. We thought their presentations would be of interest, even in written form, and so we asked our April and May speakers if they would be willing to submit articles on their planned presentations for this newsletter. Thus, on page 6, we have an article on “decluttering” from our April speaker, Janet Sydnor, from Smooth Transitions; and on page 7 we have an article on Cape Henlopen State Park from Friends of Cape Henlopen State Park representative, Ian Friedland.

So what happens going forward?

We have a Thursday, June 11 luncheon meeting listed on the calendar, but who knows what the situation will be then. Will 1776 Steakhouse even be open? Will group gatherings as large as our luncheons still be prohibited or discouraged? And most important, will we even want to convene at that time? We have the option of just waiting until September, since we routinely do not have chapter luncheons or publish our newsletter in July and August.

There is no need to speculate now. We will provide further information about the June meeting in our June newsletter.

In the meantime, stay home, wear masks if you go out, keep a safe distance from others, and stay safe!

Upcoming Dates

May 9

Monthly Chapter Luncheon Meeting
1776 Restaurant
Midway Shopping Center
Rehoboth Beach
CANCELLED

May 10

Mother’s Day

May 16

Armed Forces Day

May 25

Memorial Day
(Observed)

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Region II Training Academy Postponed to September

Because of the multi-state shutdowns and stay-at-home orders due to the coronavirus situation, the NARFE Region II Training Academy, originally scheduled for June 1 to 2 in York, Pennsylvania, has been postponed, and new dates set for Tuesday, September 22 and Wednesday, September 23.

The format will be the same as previously announced (*see the March newsletter*), with NARFE speakers on Tuesday afternoon and a series of roundtable discussions and breakout sessions on Wednesday on topics such as: fundraising; recruitment and retention of members; managing a chapter; service officer duties; PAC initiatives; Alzheimer’s outreach; and finances.

This is always a useful and informative program. Chapter 1690 members who would be interested in attending should contact Carl Bouchard for more information.

Plants and Gardens as Therapy

As we all seek ways to deal with the frustrations of extended times under “stay-at-home” dictates, a recent quote from a horticulturist in a Cape Gazette article leaped out of the page: “Plants give back during a crisis.”

No, this wasn’t a “talk to your plants” article like many of us remember from years ago.

But **Laura Kunkle, Executive Director of AmericaInBloom**, a national organization that encourages people to beautify their cities and towns, was quoted as saying, “As people practice social distancing, one’s home environment takes on more importance.” She said that planting gardens and having flowers in the home can help people “find comfort during times of crisis.”

She said this is not a new phenomenon, although it can be particularly important to people feeling isolated under the current restrictions. “From victory gardens during World Wars I and II to therapy gardens for people of all ages and abilities, plants have given back to us during times of crisis and need.”

She said that “While flowers, plants and trees certainly add beauty to the environment, they also have economic, environmental, and health and well-being benefits for people who actively participate in planting or even passively appreciate the beauty these add to the landscape or their home.”

Kunkle commented that plants “can put people in better moods, increase social interaction, relieve stress, and help to create pride of place.” Gardening outside in particular, she says, whether vegetable or flower, “gives people access to sunshine, fresh air, and exercise. These combine to increase people’s mental and physical health in this time of extreme uncertainty and stress.”

For more information on the benefit of plants, flowers, and trees, go to www.AmericaInBloom.org.

Carl Bouchard Interview on Rehoboth Radio 99.1

In addition to serving our chapter as President, **Carl Bouchard** has had a long love affair with photography. Members may recall an article he wrote for this Newsletter describing his work as the official photographer for the Washington D.C. Cherry Blossom Princess Program of the National Conference of State Societies during the annual Cherry Blossom Festival.

On April 14th, Carl appeared on local low-power Rehoboth Beach radio station 99.1 to talk about this avocation, discussing the Cherry Blossom experience, as well as his work with the Mispillion Art League.

You can listen to his very interesting interview on the station’s website, as follows.

Click on this link: <https://www.radiorehoboth.com/ind.../contributors/133-daybreak> That will take you to the Daybreak Morning Show page.

Scroll down to the **DayBreak_04-14-20 line**; right click on the white ball, and enter “Play”

Then advance the time bar to just before 1:28. Carl’s interview is from 1:28 to 1:38.

Enjoy the show!

Public Service Recognition Week

The important work of public servants will be in the spotlight during Public Service Recognition Week (PSRW) May 3-9. Sponsored annually by NARFE and other member organizations of the Public Employees Roundtable, the event honors the millions of men and women who serve our nation as federal, state, county, and local government employees. For more information and updates, visit the [PSRW website](https://psrw.ourpublicservice.org/) at <https://psrw.ourpublicservice.org/>

President's Column

Carl Bouchard

Two months ago, I was not expecting to *not* prepare an agenda for the May membership meeting. I had felt our planning was on track with an excellent program lined up for the rest of the year. Then the cancellations began. Many NARFE training sessions and conferences have been cancelled or postponed. Let us hope we can get back to normal by June or at least by September.

Talk about standing the world on end!

Usually, many of us do some kind of penance during lent but this year everyone was forced to do some kind of penance, just not the planned one. My biggest one was having our June trip to Russia cancelled followed by sheltering in place and not being able to go to a sit-down restaurant. Of course, our family worship schedule has been upset

One thing that helps is we are going out and strolling around the neighborhood, as are our neighbors, all 12 of us in our subdivision – keeping 6 feet apart from each other, of course - which is inaccessible by outside pedestrians.

However, somehow getting takeout and eating it in your car does not excite me anymore, probably not since I was a kid or my kids were little, and taking it home is not particularly appealing, other than just getting pizza or Chinese takeout for dinner. That concept may change the way of the future. We are gradually emptying our freezer and finding stuff we had forgotten about. Maybe we can get the freezer down low enough so I can defrost it.

It's also affecting our families. My grandkids' university classes have been scheduled on-line and on-site classes cancelled. Job offers are on hold or rescinded and summer sessions cancelled, with a big cloud over the fall semester. LSAT exams are postponed as are many other national exams such as for licensing Professional Engineers.

Will this last forever or will we revert back to our old habits?

You may have noticed that the price of gas has plummeted, but it will rise again. Other items that make up the Consumer Price Index also have decreased in value. This means that the CPI has decreased to a 3-year low, which pretty much guarantees that we will not have an annuity increase come next January 1. Some of you will remember that we went without a substantial increase in our annuity for several years about 10 years ago. But Congress or the President may decide to give us a token half or one percent increase. Life is always full of surprises during an election year.

Another item to note is that all of us 72 years old will not have to take the required minimum distribution from our Individual Retirement Accounts and 401K accounts for 2020. Congress waived the mandatory RMD requirement in the COVID-19 Stimulus Bill. The IRS and Delaware Division of Revenue also moved tax filing deadlines back, both for 2019 returns, and for 2020 quarterly advance payments. (See page 8 for details on the estimated tax changes). Of course, you should consult your financial and tax advisor about all of these actions. .

I hope you are all doing well during this period of self-isolation. We all hope we can get like back to more normal as soon as possible. Stay Safe!



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Secretary	
Martha Justice	664-1231
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2020-2021	
Linda Berwick	436-4261
Maria Ryan	537-1117

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NARFE Works on Behalf of Federal Employees and Retirees

We have previously discussed the important job that NARFE and its legislative staff perform in protecting federal retirees when members of Congress seek to cut earned benefits, or look to minimize the contributions that federal workers make in our communities. We have often stressed this important work in urging NARFE members to contribute to NARFE-PAC.

However, NARFE also takes initiatives to seek new legislation and provide new benefits for federal employees and retirees. Recently President Ken Thomas wrote to Members of Congress urging "changes to federal law as you craft additional legislative responses to the COVID-19 pandemic." Excerpts from that letter follow:

"I write on behalf of the more than 5 million active and retired federal employees represented by the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) to urge prompt action on legislation that will assist those on the front lines in the country's COVID-19 crisis:

"The nation's federal and postal workers, America's federal civil servants, have worked tirelessly to keep our government running and our citizens protected during these trying times. In response to their service and their continued selflessness, I ask for your support.

"While there are a number of COVID-19-related issues affecting federal and postal employees that NARFE and our coalition partners have advocated for, I am now writing to request your support for the following changes to federal law as you craft additional legislative responses to the pandemic:

- Require all Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program plans to cover the cost of telehealth services, where practicable.
- Give federal and postal employees who are not currently enrolled in an FEHB plan the opportunity to enroll now by deeming a public health emergency (such as the COVID-19 outbreak) as a "qualifying life event," permitting open enrollment and changes in coverage.
- Extend the emergency sick leave and family leave provisions of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act ("Families First Act") to all federal employees, including health care providers and emergency responders. Correcting this oversight requires nothing more than a technical fix to the CARES Act.
- Extend weather and safety leave to employees who cannot safely travel to their duty stations because of the coronavirus outbreak but who are not able to perform their duties remotely, and authorize the use of weather and safety leave to cover child and dependent care responsibilities arising from the pandemic.
- Bolster the financial stability of the United States Postal Service by providing emergency appropriations."

The letter concluded, "As you work to further address the human suffering and economic impact of this health crisis, we stand ready to partner with you, sharing our experience and talents as part of our commitment to preserve, promote and protect the country we love."

Sunshine Report

CeCe Niemi

A Sympathy Card was sent to the families of **James Douglas Smith** and **Jay "Harry" Adams**.

Online condolences were posted for the families of **Mary Katherine McLaughlin** and **Delmas R. Reynolds**.

We mourn the passing of these loyal chapter members.



Alzheimer's Report

Lisa Botluk

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Tips for Dementia Caregivers

The Alzheimer's Association has issued informational guidelines to assist caregivers of seniors with dementia in coping with the onslaught of the spread of the coronavirus disease, COVID-19. It points out that while the existence of dementia itself does not increase the risk for getting COVID-19, dementia-related behaviors, increased age, and common health conditions that often accompany dementia may increase risk.



Tips for dementia caregivers at home

Caregivers of individuals living with Alzheimer's and all other dementia should follow guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and consider the following tips:

- For people living with dementia, increased confusion is often the first symptom of any illness. If a person living with dementia shows rapidly increased confusion, contact your health care provider for advice.
- People living with dementia may need extra and/or written reminders and support to remember important hygienic practices from one day to the next.
 - Consider placing signs in the bathroom and elsewhere to remind people with dementia to wash their hands with soap for 20 seconds.
 - Demonstrate to them thorough hand-washing.
 - Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol that can be a quick alternative to hand-washing if the person with dementia cannot get to a sink or wash his/her hands easily.
- Ask your pharmacist or doctor about filling prescriptions for a greater number of days to reduce trips to the pharmacy.
- Think ahead and make alternative plans for the person with dementia should adult day care, respite, etc. be modified or cancelled in response to COVID-19.
- Think ahead and make alternative plans for care management if the primary caregiver should become sick.

Tips for caregivers of individuals in assisted living

The CDC has provided guidance on infection control and prevention of COVID-19 in nursing homes. This guidance is for the health and safety of residents. Precautions may vary based on local situations.

- Check with the facility regarding their procedures for managing COVID-19 risk. Ensure they have your emergency contact information and the information of another family member or friend as a backup.
- Do not visit your family member if you have any signs or symptoms of illness.
- Depending on the situation in your local area, facilities may limit or not allow visitors. This is to protect the residents.
- If visitation is not allowed, ask the facility how you can have contact with your family member. Options include telephone calls, video chats, or even emails to check in.

If your family member is unable to engage in calls or video chats, ask the facility how you can keep in touch with facility staff in order to get updates

Planned April Luncheon Meeting: Time to Declutter

The planned speaker for our April luncheon meeting was Janet Sydnor, the owner and founder of Smooth Transitions Delaware, a firm that helps people downsize their personal belongings either for an upcoming move, or just to simplify their life.

She was delighted to present a version below of her planned presentation.



Have you ever looked at your closets, your attics, your basements, your overflowing bureau drawers, and considered downsizing, even if you aren't planning to move anytime soon? And then, did you push that thought onto the backburner for another day? And now the clutter is even worse than before?

Well, downsizing is a terrific idea! And I'm here to help you walk through it.

However, many of you have likely already had the difficult task of sorting through a parent's belongings, perhaps when they moved into an assisted living community or after they passed away. I did this with my mother when my father passed away and she sold his beloved, and chock-full, second home on the Elk River in Maryland.

That experience is why I started Smooth Transitions Delaware. I wanted to help people and families who needed to get through a difficult time but for various reasons could not do the job of downsizing themselves.

The most important thing I have learned is that downsizing on your own terms is far better than downsizing in a crisis.

For instance, when I have worked with someone who chose to move to an independent living community, they often have divested 70% - 80% of everything they owned prior to the move, yet, because they made the decision on their own, they had very little difficulty saying goodbye to hundreds of items.

However, in a crisis move, my clients were overwhelmed and nearly every decision was difficult and in many cases traumatic.

Decluttering can help you avoid this kind of situation. Most importantly, even if a move is

not imminent, just clearing out extra clutter that you don't need or want any more can make your life easier. Here are some suggestions:

- Recycle or toss clutter such as old magazines or extra to-go containers. Downsize or right-size belongings by culling out old, stained or torn items such as sheets and towels.
- Bag up clothes you don't intend to wear for whatever reason, and donate them to a thrift store.
- Shred old paperwork a little at a time.
- Beyond the easy items, you have time to take on more difficult, emotional jobs such as photographs.
- For other tips, go to my blog post on www.yourmovemanaged.com.

This is also a fantastic time to tell the stories and history behind your important items. Do your spouse and children know why something is special to you? If they had to choose your favorite piece in a collection, could they? Did it travel across an ocean with an immigrating family member? Was it the first gift your husband gave you? Keep these memories alive by making a recording about an item, or making a video telling the item's story while holding it in your hand or standing next to it. Or you could simply write it down.

So get started now. While now you may have to wait a bit before you can drop off any boxes or bags to donate, the emotional benefit of sorting out unnecessary or unwanted items, and clearing out your space, will start right away!

Planned May Luncheon Meeting: Friends of Cape Henlopen State Park

*The planned speaker for our May luncheon meeting was **Ian Friedland**, a volunteer with the **Friends of Cape Henlopen State Park**. He was planning on filling us in on the many activities involved with this extensive state treasure in our own backyard.*

Ian is himself a retired federal employee, after years of service with the Federal Highway Administration, including a prestigious stint as a Presidential Management Fellow. Locally, Ian is also active with the Marine Education Research and Rehabilitation Institute (MERR).

He was delighted to present a written version below of his planned presentation to us in May.



The Friends of Cape Henlopen State Park (FOCHSP) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit all-volunteer organization that works with the Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation, and the Cape Henlopen State Park staff, to support and advocate for one of the country's most unique public parks. Membership dues, fundraisers, and individual contributions allow FOCHSP to support park projects and provide funding to help address needs identified by Park management.

With the help of volunteers, FOCHSP conducts a number of ongoing activities and events, including:

- The very popular Osprey Cam;
- The borrow-a-bike program, which provides free loaner bikes to Park visitors;
- A monthly Trails Day maintenance and cleanup of Park trails; and
- A series of well-attended fundraising events, including our annual Flea Market; Wine, Beer and Cheese Tasting; Youth Fishing Tournament; and Chocolate Tasting.

Recent Park investments by FOCHSP include the children's playground (along with its annual maintenance), sponsorship of the main beach lifeguard stands, Mobi-Mats at several dune crossings, beach wheelchairs, and purchase of and support for Vos, the K-9 recently added to Park enforcement staff.

FOCHSP also provides scholarships to Title I schools to offset the cost of travel and Park entrance fees so children can participate in a number of Nature Center educational programs throughout the year.

New members of the Friends group, and volunteers who can help support and maintain the Park we all love, are encouraged and welcome.

For more information and/or to become a member, please contact the Friends of Cape Henlopen State Park via its website (www.friendsofcapehenlopen.org), by email (FOCHSP@gmail.com), or by phone (302-858-6127)



Volunteers for Friends of Cape Henlopen State Park join to help maintain and clean up the park's trails.



NARFE

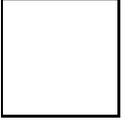
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

Coastal Sussex Chapter 1690

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May 2020 Newsletter

IRS - When to Pay Estimated Tax

Payment Period	Due Date
January 1 – March 31	April 15 – Extended to July 15, 2020
April 1 – May 31	June 15 - Extended to July 15, 2020
June 1 – August 31	September 15, 2020
September 1 – December 31	January 15* of the following year.

Source: <https://www.irs.gov/faqs/estimated-tax/individuals/individuals-2>

Delaware Estimated Tax Payments

Estimated personal income tax payments that are due on April 30, 2020 (2019 Tax Returns and 1st Quarter estimated tax) are extended to July 15, 2020.

Please note that the second quarter payments remain due on June 15, 2020.

Source: https://revenuefiles.delaware.gov/2020/TIM2020-01_COVID-19_filing_extension.pdf