



# NARFE

## Coastal Sussex Chapter 1690



Volume 6 Issue 9

PO Box 390, Ocean View, DE 19970

November 2015



### BC/BS Highmark Delaware Speaker at November 12 Chapter Luncheon



Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware Client Service Manager **Deborah Parker-McCord** will be the featured speaker at our November 12 luncheon meeting, and will discuss federal health plan issues and developments.

She will bring us up to date on benefit changes for 2016, and will be available to answer questions. As a Client Service Manager at Highmark, Deborah exercises her knowledge of the different health benefit products, corporate policies, and procedures to benefit clients.

Deborah has been a Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware employee since 1997, serving in various departments including Customer Service, responsible for serving customers and providers regarding contracts, benefits questions, member education, and timely resolution of claims-related inquiries. Her responsibilities include coordination of new plan implementation and resolution of service issues.

This is the fourth year a Highmark expert has joined us, and it is always one of our most well-attended and interesting meetings. She will provide a lot of useful information, so bring your questions and concerns – and your note pads.

#### Upcoming Dates

- November 1**  
Daylight Savings Ends
- November 4**  
Executive Board  
1-2:30pm  
Meeting Room B  
South Coastal Library  
Bethany Beach
- November 11**  
Veterans Day
- November 12**  
Monthly Chapter Luncheon Meeting  
12 Noon  
**1776 Restaurant**  
Midway Shopping Center  
Rehoboth Beach
- November 26**  
Thanksgiving Day

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#### Officers and Committee Chairs

The following are the nominees for vacant positions for Chapter officers and members-at-large for the two-year 2016-2017 term. They are elected positions. The election will be held at the November chapter meeting.

- President - Carol Weber
- 1st Vice President - Larry Trombello
- 2nd Vice President - Eric West
- Member-at-large - Bob Clark
- Member-at-large - Dick Oliver

We appreciate the contributions to our chapter by officers stepping down at the end of their current terms, including 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Dick Oliver, and Members-at-Large Diane Daly and Shirl Hudak.

In appointed committee positions, Harold Barber has agreed to serve on the Nominating Committee and Claude Benner will be our new Alzheimer's Committee Chairperson. Thanks to Barbara Geibel and Pat Brady-Rice whose nominating committee terms have expired, and to Dick Oliver for his work as Alzheimer's Committee chair.

There is still an outstanding vacancy on the Nominating Committee, and we need a chair and co-chair of Social Committee to coordinate our monthly luncheons. We all know how important THAT function is!

## October Lunch Features CHEER Representative

David Fiske

Senior citizens in Sussex County can remain “healthy and active” by participating in programs at seven CHEER activity Centers throughout the county, including Georgetown, Greenwood, Lewes, Long Neck, Milton, Ocean View and Roxana, **Anthony Del Franco**, Director of Marketing for the CHEER senior citizens service organization, told us at our October luncheon meeting at 1776 Restaurant in Rehoboth Beach.



“It's important for seniors to get out and socialize,” he said. He told luncheon attendees, “We welcome and utilize volunteers like yourself for our numerous programs,” and he urged retirees to consider joining their efforts.

Mr. Del Franco said the organization also runs a number of programs offering in-home services to seniors, and he said, “A major goal of CHEER is to allow seniors to age in their own homes, rather than having to move to institutional care.”

He said they also offer transportation services “to help seniors maintain their independence and have access to their community.” In addition to providing transportation to and from the CHEER Activity Centers, the organization is available to provide transportation for weekly shopping trips, medical visits, and recreational and educational activities.

Mr. Del Franco said they prepare food and serve meals to hundreds of seniors a day, both at the CHEER activity centers and through their Meals-on-Wheels program, and also offer home health services directed by Registered Nurses, including nursing oversight, personal care, and housekeeping services. They also are expanding an Adult Daycare Program, “to offer a stimulating environment for participating members based on their individual needs and functional ability.”

He said they are particularly proud of the programs they have developed to help caregivers of seniors. “We understand that caregivers have a difficult job and often need a break, so through our Caregiver Respite Service, we can send in a trained staff member to take over the duties for a few hours a day or up to full 24/7 coverage.” He said they also have partnered with the Alzheimer's Association to offer a family support group for caregivers.



## Fall Fund-Raising Report

Pat & Vinny Rice

**BOSCOV DISCOUNT CARD:** The BOSCOV'S "Friends Helping Friends" Fundraiser Event on October 20 resulted in the sale of 85 Shopping Passes – raising \$425 for the chapter. A big thank you to Kathy Lagore, Greg Neuner, Larry Trombello, and Carol Weber for their help with this event. (See Picture on page 8)



**RESTAURANT DISCOUNT CARD:** The Restaurant Dining Card fundraiser was launched to raise additional funds for our chapter. The cards are only \$18 (our chapter earns \$8 per card) and are good in 28 restaurants in the area from October 1, 2015, to April 30, 2016. (There are some restrictions by individual restaurants on what days of the week the cards can be used). The way it works is that in participating restaurants, your second entrée' is free (up to a \$15.00 value). You get to try each of the 28 restaurants on the card at least once (some more than once). Once you've used the card twice, you've paid for it. Great for those days when you may not feel like fixing lunch or dinner!

This fundraiser is still on-going, so if you haven't bought your card yet, contact Pat or Vinny Rice at [patnvin@gmail.com](mailto:patnvin@gmail.com) (215-805-7782/7783) and we will get you your card.

THANK YOU to all who participated in making both these events a success.

## 2015 "Sammies" Awards Recognize Outstanding Federal Service

*Each year, the non-profit Partnership for Public Service organization awards the Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals, (the "Sammie" awards") to recognize outstanding service by federal employees. We thought NARFE chapter members would be interested in details on the awardees:*

- Federal Employee of the Year: Steven A. Rosenberg, chief of surgery at the National Cancer Institute, who spent 40 years developing life-saving treatments that stimulate the immune system to attack cancer cells.
- National Security and International Affairs Medal: Mia Beers and the Ebola Disaster Assistance Response Team from USAID for work to stop the spread of the disease in West Africa.
- Call to Service Medal: Adam R. Schildge of the Federal Transit Administration for helping state and local authorities protect infrastructure damaged during Hurricane Sandy.
- Management Excellence Medal: Edward C. Hugler of the Labor Department, for management projects to improve Labor's operations, including Benefits.gov.
- Career Achievement Medal: Hyun Soon Lillehoj, an Agricultural Research Service molecular biologist, for work to make it safer to eat poultry.
- Science and Environment Medal: Jacob E. Moss, of the Environmental Protection Agency, for work to combat indoor pollution from cook stoves used in poor countries.
- Citizen Services Medal: Lucile Jones of the U.S. Geological Survey for leading groundbreaking research on earthquakes.
- Homeland Security and Law Enforcement Medal: Ron Ross, of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, for work developing cyber standards for agencies.

## 2015 Officers

<b>President</b> Larry Trombello	430-7689
<b>1st Vice President</b> Carol Weber	829-8906
<b>2nd Vice President</b> Dick Oliver	539-3771
<b>Secretary</b> Kathleen Lagore	537-5484
<b>Treasurer</b> Michael Guerriere	249-2616
<b>Federation President</b> Walt Berwick	436-4261

## Members-at-Large

<i>2014–2015</i> Diane Daly	609-313-2309
Shirl Hudak	sh92581@aol.com
<i>2015–2016</i> John Pitman	539-5280
Eric West	537-2968

## Nominating Committee

<i>2014–2015</i> Barbara Geibel	227-6019
Pat Brady-Rice	215-805-7782
<i>2015–2016</i> Linda Berwick	436-4261
Vinny Rice	215-805-7783

## Committee Chairs

<b>Alzheimers</b> Dick Oliver	539-3771
<b>Chaplain</b> Theresa Pitman	539-5280
<b>Legislative</b> Eric West	537-2968
<b>Membership</b> Ron & Carol Weber	829-8906
<b>NARFE-PAC</b> Greg Neuner	539-1013
<b>Newsletter</b> <i>Editor-</i> David Fiske	604-0504 davidfiske17@gmail.com
<i>Email Dist.-</i> Walt Berwick	436-4261 narfede@comcast.net
<i>Publisher-</i> Kristine Johnson	227-6874 Minuteman Press
<b>Public Relations</b> David Fiske	604-0504
<b>Service Officer</b> Fran Tober	934-6502
<b>Social Chair</b> Linda Berwick	436-4261
Kathy Trombello	430-7689
<b>Sunshine</b> Cece Niemi	suomien@mchsi.com
<b>50/50 Raffle</b> Tony Mileo	947-0776

## President's Message

Larry Trombello



The structure of our chapter membership meetings is set by national headquarters. The chapter has flexibility in obtaining a guest speaker for the program portion of the meeting. This keeps the meeting from being solely a business meeting. Our speakers provide interesting and stimulating information to our members. It is my opinion, as well as others, that the program topic and quality of the speaker positively influences the membership attendance at the meeting.

I want to thank our current 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Dick Oliver for all his work over the past two years in arranging speakers for our meetings. It is no easy job. Through Dick's efforts we have enjoyed hearing from a number of interesting speakers on a wide diversity of topics.

Beginning in January we welcome Dr. Eric West as our new 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President. Eric wants to contact speakers on topics that you are interested in. Every member has an opportunity to provide input on speakers. Those members who attend the November 12<sup>th</sup> membership meeting can list ideas for program topics on a speaker suggestion sheet that will be available at each table.

If you are not attending the meeting, but wish to suggest a topic of interest you may email me at [trombello@comast.net](mailto:trombello@comast.net). In addition, if you know a person who can speak on a topic of interest, please let us know their name and any contact information. Your input will be most helpful to Eric in planning our luncheons, and to the entire Chapter with interesting speakers and meetings. Please take this opportunity to let us know what you would like to hear from our guest speakers.

**Happy Veterans Day!!** I would like to take this opportunity to say “thank you for your service” to all our members who have served in the military.

I also wish each and every member a most **Happy Thanksgiving Day**. In addition to our individual blessings, we are all blessed to live in a most wonderful country.



## Social Committee Report

Linda Berwick and Kathy Trombello

We welcomed 40 members and guests to our October meeting. Our speaker informed us about CHEER's many programs helping the seniors in Sussex County. It was very valuable information for us or to give to a friend.

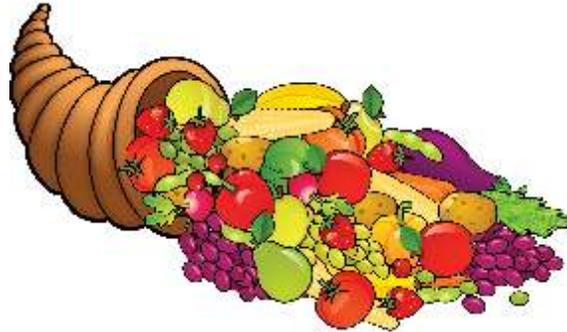


At our next meeting on November 12<sup>th</sup>, we will be able to get information about the 2016 changes to federal employee Blue Cross/Blue Shield health benefits. Come and bring your questions!

Please let Linda know your lunch choice by Tuesday Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>.

## December Gift Tradition at December Lunch Meeting

A "Heads up" for Members to begin thinking of \$10 Christmas gifts to bring to our December Chapter Luncheon Meeting to be delivered to Alzheimer's patients at local senior and nursing facilities. More details will follow in the December newsletter.




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### LUNCHEON RESERVATION FORM

*Mail to:* Linda Berwick, 37818 Cedar Road, Selbyville, DE 19975  
or call (302) 436-4261; or email [linda-berwick@comcast.net](mailto:linda-berwick@comcast.net)

Please note, I will respond to each email reservation. If you don't receive an email response from me, please contact me again.

Please make reservations for \_\_\_\_\_ Member(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Guest(s) for **Thursday, November 12, 2015, at 12 Noon at 1776 Restaurant in Midway Mall**, near the theaters. **Price = \$17.00 per person, which includes gratuities.**

#### Luncheon Selections:

- \_\_\_ (1) Tuna melt on English muffin with cheddar cheese, chips and pickle  
\_\_\_ (2) Eastern Shore favorite - chicken salad on greens with breaded oysters  
\_\_\_ (3) Caesar salad with chicken breast

**Dessert: Chocolate Cake**

My check in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ made payable to "NARFE Chapter 1690" is enclosed.

**NOTICE: PERSONS MAKING RESERVATIONS, BUT NOT ATTENDING MUST PAY FOR MEAL(S)**

Member(s) Names: \_\_\_\_\_ **Please Print** \_\_\_\_\_ Guest(s) Names: \_\_\_\_\_ **Please Print** \_\_\_\_\_

Reservations would be appreciated by Tuesday night. Walk-ins are welcome, however, all menu choices may no longer be available.

## Legislative report

Dr. Eric E. West

Congress and the Obama Administration are seeking ways to limit increases in Medicare Premiums which could increase by 50% for some beneficiaries next year. Premium increases could affect about 30% of 51 million enrolled in Part B of Medicare. Medicare officials are scheduled to announce the 2016 premiums this month, after the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics releases data on consumer prices. Under federal law Medicare premiums are linked to Social Security benefits. Inflation has been so low that Social Security beneficiaries will not receive a cost of living adjustment next year and therefore most Medicare beneficiaries will have their premiums remain the same with no increase.



The federal government has a continuing resolution to stay funded through December the 11th. Then there may be a threat of a government shutdown. The President has indicated that he will not sign another short-term continuing resolution. More to come just in time for Christmas.

Federal employees were honored this year for their achievements. The awards – the “Sammie” awards - are known as the “Oscars” of government because of their appearance. (See list of major winners on page 3).

The Combined Federal Campaign is examining ways to simplify the contribution process. That too could be interesting.

## OPM Open Season

Each year, OPM Open Season runs from the Monday of the second full workweek in November through the Monday of the second full workweek in December. This year, Open Season runs from **Monday, November 9, 2015, through Monday, December 14, 2015.**



**November 2015**

**LUNCHEON RESERVATION FORM**

## “How Exercise Affects the Brain and Improves Memory” - AARP

*Editor's Note: Prior luncheon speakers have spoken about the general health benefits of exercise. With our deep interest in Alzheimer's research, we thought chapter members would be interested in a recent article on the AARP website, excerpted below, that summarizes three studies showing that exercise can also be an important factor in preventing and treating Alzheimer's.*

For years, doctors have recommended exercise as one of the best ways to keep our brains healthy as we age. Now new research finds that regular sustained exercise may be able to slow or even reverse the biological changes that cause dementia. Specifically, they show that walking improves brain blood flow and clears brain toxins. What's more, exercise may even be an effective treatment for those with Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia.

### (1) Clearing “toxic tau”

In one study, 71 sedentary men and women, average ages 55 to 90, with mild cognitive impairment – memory loss which is often a precursor to Alzheimer's disease — and pre-diabetes exercised at a YMCA for 45 minutes four times a week over six months. Researchers found that exercise not only improved thinking skills in those with memory problems but also reduced levels of “toxic tau” protein in the brain. In addition, the vigorous-exercise group experienced improved blood flow to areas of the brain that are usually restricted in those with memory loss. A control group that just did stretching exercises had no improvements in tau protein levels or blood flow.

Notably, the exercise group improved from their original scores by 15 percent on three tests of executive function (which measures the ability to plan and organize thoughts, and is often one of the first casualties of early Alzheimer's disease), compared with the stretching group, which continued to decline. Plus, blood pressure and triglyceride levels dropped in the vigorous-exercise group.

### (2) Exercise as a treatment for Alzheimer's

Researchers in Denmark looked at whether exercise can improve memory, function and brain biology in those who already have Alzheimer's disease. They assigned 200 patients to either an exercise group or a control group. The exercise group

did aerobic activity for 60 minutes three times a week for four months. The researchers found that the control group as a whole did not experience improved memory and thinking skills, but the group that exercised more vigorously saw improvement in mental speed and attention.

The exercise group also had less anxiety, irritability, and depression than they did before the study, while the control group worsened. These symptoms are important because agitation and other disturbing behaviors are often some of the main reasons Alzheimer's patients end up in nursing homes.

### (3) Walking for better brain blood flow

A third study involved research on exercise as therapy for people who have vascular cognitive impairment, a common form of memory loss caused by lack of blood flow to the brain that results in ministrokes. In the study, 30 people with vascular dementia exercised outdoors for 40 minutes three times a week with a 10- to 15-minute warm-up and cool down. Another 30 men and women just took nutrition and cooking classes. The researchers found that, at six months, the walking group improved on memory tests whereas the nutrition group got slightly worse.

**Conclusion:** Citing these studies, one researcher said, “I want to emphasize the message that something is better than nothing. Starting is better than remaining sedentary, even if you start late in life. It's like retirement planning. Never starting is the worst case. The earlier you start, the better off you will be, but it's never too late to start.”

*(Article reprinted from AARP: <http://blog.aarp.org>. (Posted By Elizabeth Agnvall July 2015 in Bulletin Today, Health Talk) To see the entire article, go to <http://blog.aarp.org/2015/07/24/how-exercise-affects-the-brain-and-improves-memory-loss/>*

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## November 2015 Newsletter



Larry Trombello, and Vinnie and Pat Rice, man NARFE chapter table at BOSCOV's in Dover Delaware to sell "Friends Helping Friends" discount cards as part of a chapter fund-raising effort. See story page 3.