



NARFE

Coastal Sussex Chapter 1690



Volume 11 Issue 7

PO Box 390, Ocean View, DE 19970

September 2020



Postponement of Chapter Luncheon Meetings Continues in September

After our summer break, we are pleased to resume sending out our monthly chapter newsletter – and our first concern is to express our hope that all of our members, and your families, have stayed safe during the summer months when tragically the coronavirus pandemic continued to spread.

It is clear that the conditions have not improved enough to be able to gather as a group for our monthly luncheon meetings, so we are formally canceling our scheduled September 10 luncheon meeting at 1776 Steakhouse.

As for October and the rest of the fall? We're in a wait and see situation. We will carefully review the next three or four meetings as the scheduled time approaches. We will watch the health situation, the state directives and mandates, and the capabilities and arrangements at the restaurant, and the Executive Board will decide when we feel it is safe to resume getting together in person.

As the Executive Board stated in March, our policies for conducting chapter business will be guided by caution and prudence, and the health and safety of our members will always be paramount.

PLEASE! Remember to wear masks and maintain social distancing when you are out.

Upcoming Dates

September 2

Executive Board
Zoom Meeting
1:00 pm

September 7

Labor Day

September 10

(Scheduled)
Monthly Chapter
Luncheon Meeting
(Canceled)

September 11

Patriot Day

September 13

National
Grandparents Day

September 22

1st Day of Autumn

Members-at-Large and Committee Chairs Needed

Even though we are not temporarily meeting at our monthly chapter luncheons, the work of NARFE and our Chapter is continuing, and the calendar has stayed in place.

This means that by the end of the year, we will have elections (probably by email vote) for any vacant chapter positions.

The primary positions to fill are the two **Member-at-Large** positions of the Executive Board to serve two-year terms (2021-2023). **Pat Brady-Rice's** two-year term will expire at the end of 2020, and one other position for that term is currently vacant. (**Linda Berwick** and **Maria Ryan** are currently serving as Member-at-Large for the 2020-2021 term.)

We hope two members would be willing to step forward and help the chapter by serving on the Executive Board in this capacity. If you have any questions about the position, please contact our Nominating Committee Chairman **Vinnie Rice** (215-805-7783).

We also need a volunteer to serve as Chair of our Alzheimer's Committee. This person helps to keep members informed through the newsletter of developments in Alzheimer's research, and assists in the NARFE, and our chapter, commitment to raising funds to support Alzheimer's research. Please let Chapter President **Carl Bouchard** (302-424-4425) know if you have any interest in this position or have any questions.

Thank you to everyone who helps to keep our Chapter active and strong!

In This Issue:

September Cancellation	pg 1
Executive Board	pg 1
President's Column	pg 2
Personal Experiences	pg 3
EB Zoom Meeting	pg 3
Service Officer	pg 4
NARFE-PAC Report	pg 4
Emily Post Etiquette	pg 5
Sunshine Report	pg 6
Advocacy	pg 6
Chapter Renewal	pg 6
Alzheimer's Walk	pg 7
Alzheimer's Report	pg 7
VOTE!	pg 8

President's Column

Carl Bouchard

What a summer this has been: social distancing, wearing masks, sheltering in place, playing the waiting game, and then getting hit by Hurricane Isaias' tornado. And to top it off, no travel, trips canceled, restaurants closed, no sports, barber shops closed, and no school. One grandson's university graduation was virtual and my other grandson is back at school in his apartment studying for law school admittance but with no in-person classes.

It's as if a whole year has been lost. A person could become discouraged rapidly, but we keep hoping things will get better. However, now as a positive, it does look like kids will be returning to school in some fashion.

I don't know when Chapter 1690 will be able to meet in person. 1776 Steakhouse is currently closed for luncheons like ours. They would consider opening up for us, but it would be difficult to get everybody in since we would have to have only one or two people per table. We would need to be in Phase Three. So we are on hold until everyone feels safe.

So far at Chez Bouchard we have escaped Covid-19, and so called routine medical surgeries are being scheduled. We did break down and go to the Lobster Shanty in Fenwick Island for lobster. We have also gone to a few other restaurants, but usually during off hours where we had the places essentially to ourselves. I just got tired of a diet of pizza, Chinese food, and taco take outs! And the heat and humidity also wears me out. So we stay in.

It is like a waiting game, just like waiting for the tree clearing service to remove that 60 foot tall, 24 inch diameter tulip tree covering my AC, or the roofing company to repair the shingles that blew off during the tornado. (If you have not been in a tornado before, trust me, there is a definite freight train sound as it goes overhead!)

Since this has started, with no filming of new TV shows, I have watched more movies during the past 5 months than I have in the past 30 years, many of them classics that I had previously missed because of time. I have also rediscovered some of the movies from the '30s through the '50s with many of the old-time actors I grew up with. I enjoy the Cecil B. DeMille movies. (Janet also especially enjoys them because he was a 2nd or 3rd cousin.)

There is humor in these old films and some are corny, but there is a story line in most that you can follow. Black and white movies have a special appeal. I even convinced one of my grandsons, who is a Star Wars fanatic, to watch some of them, especially when he discovered that one of the stars of the first Star Wars movie was long-time actor Sir Christopher Lee (who unfortunately passed away in 2015 at the young age of 93). It gave him an opportunity to see Lee in action as a very young actor. (My grandson remarked that I could pass for Lee's double when I had my "Coronavirus beard".)

I hope you ALSO have been able to find some things to reminisce about during this time. (See the note on page 3 on sharing your own brief anecdotes in our newsletter).

I pray that we can join together soon to keep our NARFE chapter active.



Share Your Social Distancing Experiences with Chapter Members

One of the benefits and joys of our monthly chapter luncheon gatherings is the chance to socialize and communicate with each other.

While that is not happening in the absence of these luncheons, we'd like to offer future editions of this newsletter as a way for many of you to stay in touch and to share your coping experiences with all of us.

For instance:

- Has there been any particular on-line sites for games, hobbies, and the like that you have found particularly valuable?
- Have there been any innovative efforts in your neighborhoods for people to stay connected?
- Have you become an expert in Zoom?
- Did you become a gourmand in takeout dining?
- Have you experienced glitches in entering this on-line world that would make for amusing stories to share with our members?
- Have you discovered interesting sources for entertainment and information that you previously were unaware of?
- Have you pursued any new ways to interact with individuals and groups who you are normally engaged with in person?
- What ways have you been using to stay in touch with loved-ones?

If you have any "brief" light-hearted stories, and anecdotes (please, nothing political) that you think would be interesting to share with all chapter members, please email them to our newsletter editor, David Fiske at davidfiske17@gmail.com, and he will work on including them in a future newsletter. [Note: he will reserve the right to edit your submissions for space considerations.]

Looking forward to hearing your stories!

Zoom



We're doing it! And our grandchildren will be proud of us retirees!

In the first week of September, the Executive Board is holding its monthly meeting through a Zoom video conference where all the participants will be at their own home computers.

Thanks are owed to chapter Service Officer **Mike Buso** who went onto the Zoom platform to set up the meeting and make the necessary arrangements.

Many organizations and groups of people have turned to this incredible linking service during the last six months to conduct business and to stay in touch with each other. We're pleased to also be able to harness this capability and continue the work of our Chapter through this new technology.

2020 Officers	
President	
Carl Bouchard	424-4425
1st Vice-President	
Larry Trombello	430-7689
Secretary	
Martha Justice	664-1231
Treasurer	
Jo Ann Teiken	616-2017
Federation Treasurer	
Jim Blakeslee	227-5306
Members-at-Large	
2019-2020	
Pat Brady-Rice	215-805-7782
2020-2021	
Linda Berwick	436-4261
Maria Ryan	537-1117
Nominating Committee	
2019-2020	
Vinnie Rice	215-805-7783
Committee Chairs	
Alzheimer's	
Lisa Botluk	443-852-0043
Chaplain	
Theresa Pitman	539-5280
Membership	
Ron & Carol Weber	829-8906
NARFE-PAC	
Greg Neuner	539-1013
Newsletter	
<i>Editor:</i> David Fiske	604-0504
	davidfiske17@gmail.com
<i>Email:</i> Pat Brady-Rice	215-805-7782
	narfeneews@gmail.com
Public Relations	
David Fiske	604-0504
Service Officer	
Mike Buso	703-861-9180
Social Committee	
Jo Ann Teiken	240-481-4623
Sunshine	
Cece Niemi	suomien@mchsi.com
50/50 Raffle	
Vinny Rice	215-805-7783

Service Officer Report

Mike Buso

Periodically in this Chapter Newsletter, our Service Officer will bring us up to date on developments and issues useful to retirees. This month, Mike is offering some insights into "Roth conversions."



Consider Roth Conversions

People with tax deferred retirement accounts, such as IRAs, 401Ks, as well as TSPs, might want to evaluate whether they should convert some of those accounts into post-tax Roth vehicles.

This evaluation should consider your expectations of increased Federal income tax rates in coming years – perhaps to pay down some of the debt taken on to weather the Covid-19 crisis. If you think that tax rates might be higher in 2021, then you might want to consider doing such a conversion before the end of 2020.

This is not a trivial decision since withdrawals for conversion in 2020 would be taxable events. Your tax bill for 2020 would be higher, and possibly so would other taxes or payments. For example, an increase in taxable income might also affect your monthly Medicare premiums in 2022, that is it might trigger a movement into a Medicare Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA) or into a higher IRMAA bracket.

As with this issue, and any other financial consideration, it is important that you first consult your financial or tax advisor before making any such move. But, don't postpone the discussion until December, when the advisors may be booked up.

NARFE-PAC Report

Greg Neuner

Based on data just released for the quarter ending June 30th, our chapter has raised \$3,659 for NARFE-PAC with 55 members contributing and 3 monthly sustainers. That is 91% of our goal of \$4,000. Thank you to all who have contributed.

We still have four months to go in the current two-year cycle, so let's continue our support for our Political Action Committee and reach or exceed our chapter's goal.

Our Delaware federation has raised \$8,294, with 123 members contributing and 9 monthly sustainers. In addition, 56 National Only members residing in Delaware have contributed \$3,140. Nationally, NARFE members have contributed \$1,730,928 to NARFE-PAC. That is 99% of the goal of \$1,750,000.

NARFE has disbursed \$1,074,000 to campaigns and committees. That's 86% of the goal of \$1,250,000. Delaware Senator Chris Coons has received \$5,000 and Delaware Congresswoman Lisa Blunt Rochester \$2,000.

Without NARFE-PAC, NARFE headquarters would lose an important tool for defending and protecting our earned pensions and benefits. As we approach this year's election, a healthy PAC is more important than ever. Since we can't collect for PAC at our suspended monthly meetings, please contribute using the form in NARFE Magazine. Make sure you indicate you are a member of Chapter 1690 so we will receive credit toward our goal.



Emily Post and the Etiquette of Social Distancing

The Emily Post family continues her tradition of writing about standards of etiquette, and a recent posting on their website – www.emilypost.com – contains an interesting article on etiquette in today’s coronavirus restrictions climate.

They write, “When we think about what advice to give today, we think first about safety and then about how to be kind and considerate and respectful when trying to be safe.”

Excerpts from the posting about specific issues follow.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

We’ve all navigated a tight aisle at a store, an elevator, or stairwell, or a friend leaning in too closely. But what is the right thing to do?”

Speak Up

Our first piece of advice is if possible to seek the help of someone in charge. But don’t do this as a way to punish someone else: it’s to make sure a concern is raised, or that help or safety can be achieved.

If someone at a store hasn’t given you enough space to pass or reach the item you’d like, there are things you can say in a friendly manner:

“Do you mind giving me just a little more space so I can pass [or grab that item] safely?”

“Excuse me Sir, the line starts back there, everyone’s just distanced.”

“I’ll wait and catch the next elevator.”

“After you, please.” (said genuinely)

If the person scoffs at you, you can wait until they move farther away, or go get something else and come back later.

Flow of Traffic

While following the guidance of the arrows and directions through stores is always important, it’s not worth getting into an altercation over. Either pass, doing what you can to keep your distance, or go back the other way if the aisle isn’t crowded.

Public Outdoor Spaces

On sidewalks, recreational paths and trails, a

group or family out together could drop to single file when passing others to help make room.

Be the person to step off the path or into the street.

Covering your mouth when you cough or sneeze, as well as not coughing, sneezing, singing, or yelling in the direction of others. is helpful.

Greetings

We miss hugs, solid handshakes, high fives, and fist bumps. But greetings that involve touching are still not recommended at this time, so perfect your waves and use your tone of voice to match the occasion.

WEARING MASKS

Wearing masks may be around for a while so it’s best to try and get used to what it’s like to interact with them on. Smiling and using your eyes and hands to gesture will be a way to connect while wearing masks.

Masks unfortunately also muffle the sound of our voices and so it’s important to get comfortable speaking up.

Wearing masks outdoors is not a bad idea if you’re passing frequently while out on rec paths and trails, or in a park, or on sidewalks. Many choose to “mask when they pass.”

If you’re uncomfortable when you encounter someone without a mask on, resist the urge to glare or tsk-tsk at them. Instead, do what you can to keep yourself physically distanced and avoid interacting.

BE COMPASSIONATE

In dealing with others, arming ourselves with kindness and avoiding judgment is good etiquette.

Reaching out to one another; being patient and kind with each other; listening to one another; respecting one another; helping those in need - these are the kinds of attitudes and actions that will carry us through. They often cost us nothing, and yet they can make an impactful difference.

Sunshine Report

Cece Niemi



A “Get Well” card was sent to Caddie Ann Joseph.

Advocacy Notes:

Carl Bouchard

I think we are still at a gridlock in Washington and we will be until after the election, and I don’t hold out much hope for the next Congress. Frankly, I think we served in much more friendly times when federal workers were respected as people and their efforts appreciated.

Here are some of the issues that NARFE and other federal employee groups are looking at:

- The Post Office is still in turmoil, as are several agencies, including Homeland Security;
- Many Federal employees are being told to relocate or resign;
- There is no buyout;
- Ideas are being floated to reduce the TSP federal contribution to new hires.



One particular issue NARFE is paying close attention to is the size of a federal employee pay raise in 2021.

The law provides that if Congress fails to specify a pay raise for federal employees, that authority falls to the President, who determines how much to increase federal pay, if at all.

In February, the Administration proposed a 1% across the board pay increase for civilian federal workers, while keeping locality pay at 2020 levels. That plan marks a significant reduction from the average 3.1% pay raise—a 2.6% across the board increase along with a 0.5% increase in locality pay—authorized for 2020.

However, at the end of July, the House passed fiscal year 2021 appropriations legislation that did not include provisions for a federal pay raise next year.

Therefore, it is likely that the Administration’s proposal will govern. However observers have pointed out that this proposal was made before the Coronavirus pandemic set in which could change things.

NARFE President Ken Thomas said in a statement that “Federal workers continue to make outstanding contributions and sacrifices in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and many continue to face a greater risk of infection due to their civil jobs.” He said that unfortunately the House “decided to ignore those contributions, look the other way, and defer their authority over federal pay to the president, risking a minimal pay increase or even a pay freeze for our nation’s dedicated public servants. It shows an unfortunate lack of respect for public service at time when we need that more than ever.”

NARFE will be following this pay raise issue carefully.

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!

Walk to End Alzheimer's – Rehoboth Beach

In prior years, we would be announcing in this space our chapter's volunteer activity to staff the boardwalk water station for the Alzheimer's Association "Walk to End Alzheimer's - Rehoboth Beach" that is planned this year for Saturday, September 26.

But of course, this is not like prior years, and because of health concerns and the social distancing requirements of the COVID-19 crisis, the Alzheimer's Association is not holding a single, large-participation walk. Thus there will not be a water station for us to volunteer at this year.

But the "Walk to End Alzheimer's" is still alive and well through multiple community walks!

Here is what the Association has said about the modified September event:

"Your health and safety are our top priorities. This year's event won't be a large in-person gathering — instead, we invite you to walk in small teams of friends and family while others in your community do the same. Because we are all still walking and fundraising for the same thing: a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia."

Anyone interested in putting together a small neighborhood walk on September 26 to support the "Walk to End Alzheimer's", or donating to the cause, should "google" "Walk to End Alzheimer's – Rehoboth Beach" to learn about how to participate.

Alzheimer's Report

Our Alzheimer's Committee periodically reports in this space on interesting developments in Alzheimer's research that NARFE and other organizations contribute to. The Delaware Valley Alzheimer's Association Chapter on its website recently posted an article on research on a new simple blood test to help diagnose the disease. We thought excerpts from this article would be of interest.

"Until now, the only solutions to diagnose someone with Alzheimer's disease have been expensive, ineffective, or both. However this year, researchers at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference (AAIC), which was held virtually, presented a new way of diagnosing Alzheimer's that is both inexpensive and accurate: a blood test.

"Essentially, Alzheimer's is caused by an abnormal build-up in the brain of amyloid plaques, which are deformed proteins, and "tau tangles", which are aggregates of tau proteins, which then destroy important neurons in the brain.

Currently, the primary methods of diagnosing Alzheimer's are spinal taps, where doctors collect spine fluid for testing, and radioactive PET scans. However these tests only detect amyloid plaque build-up, not tau tangles.

"That is where these proposed blood tests come in.

"Tau tangles that are found in the brains of people with Alzheimer's consist of deformed versions of regular tau proteins called p-tau217

(short for phospho-tau217). Researchers in these latest tests found that Alzheimer's patients have *seven times more* of this protein than people with other or no neurological disorders. Because this protein makes it easy to distinguish Alzheimer's from other disorders, the blood test works to detect this protein and amyloid plaques to specifically diagnose Alzheimer's.

"The Alzheimer's blood test presented by researchers at AAIC looks extremely promising, but a lot of work is required for further validation in people from more routine clinical settings, and work would then be needed to achieve standardization of the test across laboratories. Researchers estimate this could take up to 5 years.

"The hope is that if this diagnostic method is perfected and deemed safe by medical professionals, it could then be distributed to hospitals, where people could quickly be diagnosed up to 20 years before any effects take place! More people could be able to take measures to suppress the effects of Alzheimer's and in the end, more deaths could be prevented."



Coastal Sussex Chapter 1690
PO Box 390
Ocean View, DE 19970
www.narfede.org

September 2020 Newsletter



Make sure you cast your votes in the fall elections!
Delaware Primary Election: Tuesday, September 15, 2020
National Election Day: Tuesday, November 3, 2020

For information on the elections in Delaware, and on how to apply for absentee voting, or for ballots under the new “vote by mail” law, go to the website of the Delaware Department of Elections at:

[votehttps://elections.delaware.gov/index.shtml](https://elections.delaware.gov/index.shtml)