

# THE VOICE OF THE CALIFORNIA FEDERATION

JULY 2018



The Training Seminars, organized by our late Executive Vice President Judy Mayora, in Bakersfield on June 19 and Roseville on June 21, were well attended (119 total) and well received. All attendees commented (except two) that the Membership Seminar was worthwhile; most stated that they learned something; nearly all stated that more similar seminars should be scheduled; and nearly all appreciated the participation of our Headquarters Executive Director, Barbara Sido, and enjoyed meeting her personally.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the instructors for developing and presenting their training material that made this seminar a great success. Not only did they spend some time to develop their training material with handouts, but they traveled to Bakersfield for their first presentation and then drove 300 miles to Roseville for their second presentation. These dedicated instructors were: Jerry Hall, Federation District V Vice President and President of the San Francisco Chapter #65; James Mathews, newly appointed Federation Executive Vice President and Legislative Chair of the Laguna Woods Chapter #970; Helen Zajac, Region VIII Vice President and Federation Past President of the Vallejo Chapter #16; Yoggi Riley, Federation Treasurer and Service Officer of the San Fernando Valley Chapter #61; Dan Mahoney, Federation Public Relations Chair and President of the American River Chapter #1596; Jeri Benson, Federation Public Relations Vice Chair and Membership Chair of Sunrise Chapter #1658; and, of course, Barb Sido, Executive Director of NARFE Headquarters.

I want to reiterate some of the suggestions made at the Seminar concerning the importance of making chapter meetings interesting and even entertaining. The ultimate goal of a good meeting is to hear members state, "WOW, I'm glad I did not miss this meeting". A good meeting always starts with how enthusiastic the President is when opening the meeting. Being a dynamic speaker and even having a charming appearance makes a big difference, but we are not all dynamic or charming. But, we can be enthusiastic, and

enthusiasm rubs off onto the attendees.

- Always have a written agenda
- Open the meeting on time with a positive note
- Ask each attendee to tell what exciting thing they did over the past 2 weeks (two minutes)
- Every Officer and Committee Chair should give a brief report (2-3 minutes)
- The National Legislation Chair should have a longer report and update the membership on legislation. Occasionally, remind the membership of the "Mission of NARFE". Briefly, NARFE supports legislation that benefits the federal community, and opposes legislation detrimental to the federal community.
- Schedule a guest speaker at your meetings to speak on subject matter of interest to your membership. Stay away from topics such as, funeral insurance, assisted living programs, etc. Invite the Newspaper Editor, Weatherman, Highway Patrol, City Historian, Sheriff's Office, City Mayor, etc.
- Have a purpose for each meeting; what do you wish to accomplish?
- Conduct your meetings in a crisp manner and make it fun.
- Pass out a sheet of paper to all attendees which has a written question, "What changes would you like to see in our meeting agenda?" or "What do we need to do to increase attendance at our meetings?" or "How can we get members to step forward to take on the role of Chapter Officer? Do them all at different meetings. No name on paper, just fold over and return to President. Also, email same to non-attendees.
- When looking for Officers or Committee Chairs, talk privately to a member, one on one. Most members are reluctant to stand up at a meeting and say, "I volunteer". The same is true when a request is made in the Chapter Newsletter.

Just think about how to make your meetings more appealing to your membership and do it!

With Warm Regards,  
Lea Zajac, CA Federation President

## IN THIS ISSUE

**Let's Have a Parade**, Linda Ingram, Dist. VIII VP - page 2

**Inappropriate Use of Chapter Newsletter**, Lea Zajac, CA Federation President - page 2

**Making A Case For Instant Runoff Voting**, Dottie Schmidt, District VI VP – page 3

**California Federation Secretary** - Sandy Griffin – Page 3

**Treasurer Thoughts**, Yoggi Riley – Page 4

**Why I Joined Narfe & Why I Stay**, Jim Mathews, Executive Vice-President CSFC – Page 5

**Federal Employee Life Insurance (FEGLI)**, Mike Siminski, District IX VP – Page 5

**Regaining Your Chapter Members Part II**, Helen Zajac, Region VIII Vice President - Page 6

## LET'S HAVE A PARADE!

At the June Training sessions held in Bakersfield we had some great presentations to inspire us to get out the message of the importance of NARFE to the Federal Community. Jerry Hall and Yoggi Riley both gave motivating speeches from their perspectives as top recruiters. Jerri Bensen and Dan Mahoney talked about Public Relations ideas for spreading the word on NARFE in the local community. One particular idea struck a cord with me and that's what I want to talk about.

Chapter 1658 has for a number of years been entering a float in their local parade. It has evolved over time from a simple car with signs to a pontoon boat complete with signs and riders "fishing" for new members off the boat! What a clever idea, and one which might be easy to duplicate in other communities with NARFE chapters.

On Fourth of July I was at home watching the Huntington Beach 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade on ABC LA. It was a larger parade than most communities, but even it had a lot of local participation from groups. Some were on floats, and others were in cars decked out with signs. And the television coverage made for an even larger audience. That made me think about my own chapter in the Antelope Valley. We have several parades over the year across the communities that make up the AV. The largest is the AV Fair parade in August. So I checked and the cost to enter a vehicle is \$25. The cost for a float under 30 feet is \$30. So for a small fee a chapter can get exposure for the chapter and have some fun in the process. Some of you may remember the fun of decorating cars and floats for Homecoming parades. Here's your chance to relive those memories!

I thought about what message we would want to include on these rolling billboards. We obviously want federal employees and retirees to know we are in the community and want them to join us. But I think we also want to send a message to the larger audience on the importance of the Federal Employees that live and work in the community. We could highlight what federal agencies are in the area, e.g., Department of Defense, BLM, VA, Social Security, Post Office, etc. We should also stress our volunteer efforts such as Alzheimer's Research, along with local chapter sponsored causes. I think we need to come up with some slogans that reflect the larger role of Federal Employees and Retirees. One idea would be a sign that simply states:

Federal Employees and Retirees....  
Honoring the Past  
Serving the Present  
Protecting the Future

There are matching funds available from both National and the California Federation to help with some of the cost of entering and decorating. I am sure we can also share ideas for slogans and decorating tips among chapters! So check out the opportunities in your area and let's have a parade!

Linda Ingram  
District VIII VP

## INAPPROPRIATE USE OF CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

The following article recently appeared in a Chapter Newsletter written by the Chapter President.

"There are certainly many important matters going on in our country now. The selection of the next Supreme Court Justice may have the longest-lasting consequence, but the issue of separating babies and young children from their parents and placing these children in caged detention facilities indefinitely is causing the most outrage in our nation. The President and his Administration need to reunite these children with their parents as soon as possible. Applying for refugee status in the U.S. is not against the law. Not all applications should be granted, but the applicants are entitled to due process and to have their claims fairly reviewed by an Immigration Judge. If more Judges are needed, then simply hire more. If it's a question of money, why not take a billion dollars from the cost of the border wall and use it to hire Judges and Attorneys? As Thomas Paine said during the American Revolution, "These are the times that try men's' souls."

Let us not forget that NARFE is a political organization, but we are non-partisan. Also remember the mission of NARFE is solely to support legislation that benefits the federal community and to oppose legislation that is detrimental to the federal community.

Using one's position as a NARFE Officer and using the NARFE Chapter Newsletter is inappropriate to promote one's personal political views. The individual involved has been advised accordingly.

Lea Zajac  
CA Federation President

### MAKING A CASE FOR INSTANT RUNOFF VOTING *Dottie Schmidt, District VI V.P.*

During a recent NARFE election members voted for new National Officers. Four people ran for NARFE president, and Preferential Voting (or Instant Runoff Voting) will be used if Ballots Questions #1 “Preferential Voting” is adopted. Those votes will be tallied shortly after June 30<sup>th</sup>, the deadline for submitting ballots and the results known very soon. If Preferential Voting is needed (assuming it is passed), it will be invoked to elect National Officers.

Most cities, counties, states and federal elections spend hours, days or weeks counting ballots either by machines or by hand, leaving the candidates and voters wondering about the outcome.

In 2016, voters in [Maine](#) approved an initiative to become the first state to use IRV statewide in elections for governor, state legislature, U.S. Senate, and U.S. House [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instant-runoff\\_voting\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_-\\_cite\\_note-boston.com-2](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instant-runoff_voting_in_the_United_States_-_cite_note-boston.com-2) Despite efforts by the state legislature and state supreme court to delay the implementation of IRV, the court eventually reversed and ruled that IRV would be introduced for the primary on June 12, 2018. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instant-runoff\\_voting\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_-\\_cite\\_note-3](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instant-runoff_voting_in_the_United_States_-_cite_note-3) In that election, Maine voters re-affirmed implementation of IRV by popular referendum while using IRV for the first time for local elections in 11 cities. Besides Maine, San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, and cities in Maryland, Colorado, Minnesota and New Mexico also use IRV.

The voting public tires of the seemingly endless campaign rhetoric, and the candidates must juggle political schedules with their personal lives and raise enough dollars for advertising to inform the public about their positions and views... TWICE... once for the primary and again for the general election. There is a solution that would help bring an end to lengthy campaigns and extensive campaign spending: INSTANT RUNOFF VOTING (IRV). This system can be used in both partisan and nonpartisan races that are for one seat, and - (drumroll) - a majority winner will be declared in just one election.

How does IRV work? ALL candidates are listed on the ballot. Instead of voting for just the candidate of your choice, voters would rank the candidates in order of their preference, i.e., voters would put a “1” next to their first choice, a “2” next to their second choice, etc. The ballots would go through rounds of counting until one candidate receives a majority of the votes, 50% plus one. If no candidate receives a majority when the ballots are counted the first time, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated. The ballots of those voters whose candidate was eliminated are recounted to determine their second choices and those numbers are added to the remaining candidates. And so on, until one candidate receives a majority, 50% plus one. The system operates as a series of run-off elections, with fewer candidates each round, until one candidate gets a majority vote. ONE ELECTION ONLY.

Shouldn't ALL cities, counties and states be encouraged to use IRV in the interest of saving money and time? If you think so, let them know. And, think of the endless political ads we wouldn't have to bear!!!

Advantages of IRV: 1. Promotes majority rule as does the two-round system we currently have. IRV elects the candidate most preferred by the voters in one election; 2. Eliminates a second election; 3. Encourages higher voter turnout; 4. Less expensive to candidates.

Disadvantages of IRV: 1. Unfamiliar to voters, even though it's simple to understand; 2. Expense of machines, i.e., touch screens, scanners, etc., to count the ranked choices.

Sources: League of Women Voters; Fair Vote; CATO Institute

### California Federation Secretary

I am Sandy Griffin and I have recently found myself as the new CSFC Secretary. My husband Ron was actually the Federal employee, working for the Defense Contract Audit Agency, mostly in the South San Francisco Bay Area. We lived in Cupertino for thirty five years and after retiring, we moved to Chico in 2004. I had worked for the Cupertino Union School District, as a Program Coordinator, Sub Teacher, and other projects such as running our three times a year University Days, requiring finding speakers, creating schedules, and other details for 21 classrooms. I still have a contracted engraving job for the school district, and until now have been on the Cupertino Sub list, not that I could sub very often since we live in Chico. Because my retirement is through STRS, and my Mom was a member, I joined CalSTRs, which is a very similar organization for retired educators to NARFE. The main mission is also to protect the benefits of retirees. I am now the Treasurer for our Butte County Division. We have three sons, spread out over a thirteen year span so we were heavily involved in youth sports, and I was a PTA President for five terms. When we moved to Chico, Ron transferred from San Jose NARFE membership, where he had not attended meetings, to the Chico Chapter. I also joined, and it was only a couple of years before Ron found himself as President and soon after, I became Secretary. When our long time newsletter editor's health made it difficult for her to continue with the whole job, I gradually took over, and have been doing it for at least four or five years now. It seems like it is always time to do another newsletter since ours is monthly except July and August. Ron is now also the District X VP so I am basically his secretary for that job also, doing the computer work involved. I had enjoyed doing the centerpieces for the last State convention and had helped in small ways with that at previous conventions. I got to meet many of the Federation Board members and enjoyed getting to know Lea and Helen Zajac through these events and maybe that is how my name came up when the need for a new secretary happened. I have a lot to learn, but appreciate the help that comes with the position. I look forward to meeting many more of you in the future. My cell phone number is (408)806-8286 and email is [sjgriffin644@gmail.com](mailto:sjgriffin644@gmail.com).

**TREASURER THOUGHTS** *By Yoggi Riley*

CSFC Leadership training was held on June 19 and 21, 2018 in Bakersfield and Roseville CA. Notice went out to all chapters to invite their membership to attend and meet our special guest, Executive Director, Barbara Sido. As it turned out, there were 119 NARFE members that attended the sessions and heard Ms. Sido. Many attended the sessions with the belief that the executives at headquarters were on a mission to ultimately eliminate chapters. Barbara informed the attendees there has never been any discussion to eliminate chapters. I found this director to be willing to listen and discuss our concerns. She further informed all attendees there are steps being taken to modify the renewal form. That revision to the renewal application will clearly explain what steps need to be taken to make sure the member is properly filling out the form to remain with the chapter. It is hoped this newly revised renewal form will reprint here on our CSFC website.

My presentation for the training sessions included Membership and Pre-Retirement Seminars. Included with this were:

1. Tips to assist members and potential members with benefits through Pre-retirement seminars,
2. The use of NARFE Webinars
3. Understanding benefits – Working with Service Officers and using the NARFE Federal Benefits Institute
4. Incentives for Membership.

I would like to discuss a bit with you the incentive program for the CSFC. We have explained in the past the incentives to pay \$10.00 to every chapter member that recruits a new member and \$75 for a recruit that signs up 10 members. There is also the incentive that CSFC pays \$15.00 for a chapter member that signs up for dues withholding and \$5.00 for a spouse that signs up for dues withholding. These are all great incentives that are explained on the CSFC website.

**\* \* \* However, there is breaking news for all chapter members to learn about. As a notice to have the Federation lead the way and hopefully grow to lead the nation with more dues withholding members, WE ARE ANNOUNCING A NEW INCENTIVE.**

New motion for an additional incentive to encourage DW for members. Motion made at 2018 March telephone E Board meeting:

***Motion: I move to have all CSFC members' names that are on Dues Withholding, placed in drawing to have one name drawn and receive \$250.00 cash prize. The annual raffle will include all members currently listed as dues***

***withholding status including any new DW members added throughout the year.***

***Motion by Yoggi Riley Second by Linda Ingram***

Under discussion it was asked if this was for all members including National members listed on DW status or just chapter members of the CSFC. All parties agreed it would include chapter members of CSFC only.

During discussion it was also agreed to have the annual raffle drawing for this cash prize of \$250.00 during April each year so we could have the prize available to give out at our convention during the convention year.

As a side thought it was suggested to the national office to have the same such incentive at the national level for all members nationwide placed in a raffle and to select one DW member per year to win a cash award of \$1000.00. Wouldn't this be a nice incentive? And just imagine how much it would save to not have to spend time, energy, and postage to not have to chase down members for renewal. And the member wins too by receiving the incentive and a chance to win \$250 each year. CSFC can be proud that we are leading the way on a smaller way to achieve better retention of membership. I hope many chapter members will jump on this bandwagon to solidify your membership through dues withholding.

This is enough from me for now. I wish you all a safe summer and hope you stay cool.



President John F. Kennedy

And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you -- ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.



**WHY I JOINED NARFE & WHY I STAY***JIM MATHEWS, EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT CSFC*

I joined NARFE in 1995 ten years before I retired while working at Monterey Air Traffic Control Tower/ Radar Approach Control. I was recruited by my manager, Forney Lundy, a long time devoted member of NARFE.

I joined NARFE because it was clear to me that whatever benefits existed at the time I was hired, or were changed during my working years, they could be changed or eliminated by Congress at any time. Unless I took action to protect my earned benefits, they could be reduced, changed or withdrawn long after I retired.

After my retirement in 2005, I became more active at the chapter level and served as chapter president. As I attended various conventions and meetings, I came to appreciate the power of our organization and our ability to influence our lawmakers. Many times I saw bills under consideration by our legislators that would strip our benefits & reduce our income. In every case, NARFE was there to fight for us. While increases to our benefits occurred occasionally, more often, NARFE successfully blocked bad things from becoming laws. Our legislative staff in Washington can only do so much. They need our support both financially and personally to make our voice heard.

As legislative chair, I went with other members to visit our congressional representatives to present the NARFE position on various bills. Over time, the congressional staff came to recognize me and while not voting in the ways NARFE wanted, they were influenced and our meeting results were passed on to NARFE headquarters. As a Congressional District Leader, I recently met again with congressional staff. Now representing three chapters instead of one, our message is more powerful and better focused.

While I enjoy our chapter meetings and the other many social aspects for being in NARFE, these are not the reasons I stay in the organization. I remain a member and am active to influence our legislators to protect my earned benefits and work to improve them. Always, our focus should be to recruit new members and retain members. The power of our numbers makes our influence greater. In my new role as federation executive vice-president, I will use my position to serve you and work to increase our membership to increase our influence.

**Federal Employee Life Insurance (FEGLI)***Mike Siminski, District IX VP*

In addition to being a DVP in the State Federation, I hold several positions in my local chapter. One is "Service Officer". In the last six months I've had three calls to help members learn what Life Insurance, if any, they have. I gave each information I gathered from the FEGLI web page. None called back saying they needed more. That started me thinking, I had no idea what insurance I had, if any. I decided to follow advice I had given others.

I faintly remember upon retirement I had several options. I recall declining any that involved further payments. I also recall a basic insurance, which would decline in value each year. It has been 20 years since retirement, so I assumed nothing was left.

First, I tried the FEGLI phone number and was told all operators are busy, try later. With recollections of past 45 minute "holds", I figured "Strike One". Next I tried the internet option. I needed a password, I searched notes on the wall next to my computer and found a faded password for "OPM". Back came a message saying because I hadn't used the password in fifteen months, it was cancelled. I couldn't find instructions how to get a new password. "Strike Two". Finally, I sent an e-mail to [retire@opm.gov](mailto:retire@opm.gov). I asked for a "Verification of Life Insurance" (VOLI), cited my retirement CSA number, and gave my mail address. I asked how to develop a new password and asked for someone to acknowledge receipt of my request.

Wow! Not just a home run, but a "Grand Slam". I received a notice of receipt of my request in a couple of days; a week later I received a printout – not only of my life insurance history and current value (which was more than I expected), but much other info about my annuity, my deductions and advice how to make changes. It gave very clear instruction on actions to be taken by survivors to claim the insurance. Two days later I received advice how to set a new OPM password.

I have now included FEGLI in my notebook of "*Things my Survivors should know*". The FEGLI web page says to use a FE-6 for death of an annuitant and a FE-6 DEP for death of a dependent. The webpage has the form and detailed instructions.

By the way, if you don't have a notebook of things your survivors should know, I suggest you pick up the 22 page NARFE brochure "Be Prepared For Life's Events". It is available to your chapter as NARFE Form 100. Our chapter ordered a couple dozen copies which we put out on a literature table at each meeting. They have all been snapped up. This form lists documents which your family will need to handle your affairs after your death. My notebook contains most of the information and documents cited in the F-100, and also contains a list of passwords, a list of recurring bills – utilities, insurance, etc. - which are automatically paid from my checking account. (I am sure my family will want to keep the internet, the lights and water, and auto and home insurance active but the checking account may be frozen and these bills could become delinquent.)

## Region VIII Vice President, Helen Zajac

### REGAINING YOUR CHAPTER MEMBERS – PART II

Many members have been confused and frustrated with the letters sent by National Headquarters for membership renewal. Because of this frustration, National Headquarters has revised the renewal letters. The renewal letters will be printed on an 8-1/2" x 14" sheet and will clearly explain to the member, the consequences of selecting "National Only" membership or "National and Chapter xxxx" membership. For those members who are "National Only" the letter will explain to the member, that they have an option to join a chapter and may find the nearest chapter by calling National Headquarters. In addition, the renewal letter will also ask the member to verify contact information, and complete as necessary with the hope to gain correct mailing addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers, so that rosters available to chapters are accurate.

The note which will appear on the Chapter Member Renewal Letter, clearly states:

Yes! Please renew my NARFE Membership as indicated below. I am currently a member of NARFE Chapter xxxx. I understand that I must choose "National" or "National and Chapter" membership. I must select a term under "National and Chapter," in order to retain my membership in chapter xxxx.

(Terms are provided for 1-year national membership at \$40; 2-year membership at \$72; or 3-year membership for \$102;) [as provided for in the National Bylaws, Article I, Section 3, paragraph A.] Chapter dues will be added accordingly for 1, 2, and 3 year renewals.

The note which will appear on the National Only Member Renewal Letter, clearly states:

Please renew my NARFE membership for the term I have selected below:

(Options are provided for 1-year membership at \$40; 2-year membership at \$72; or 3-year membership for \$102;) [as provided for in the National Bylaws, Article I, Section 3, paragraph A.]

In addition, there is a separate statement, "Your current membership is NARFE National only. If you are looking to meet other NARFE members and participate in NARFE at a local level call 800-456-8410 to find a chapter near you."

Both letters include a Step 2, which specified payment options of Check; Credit Card; or Auto Renewal, which will charge your credit card on an annual basis.

Both letters include the most important Step 3, where the member is asked to verify their contact information and complete as necessary. The letter will be pre-printed with the information on file at NARFE Headquarters for the member's name, address, city, state, zip code, email and telephone.

Both letters also include a NOTE in RED at the top right corner which states: "**ANNUITANTS AND SURVIVORS! Save 15% on annual dues with Dues Withholding – details on the other side of this form.**"

For your chapter members who realize they have been transferred out of your chapter, these renewal letters will provide an opportunity for them to reinstate into your chapter.

In addition, utilizing the Activity Reports, which can be found on the Online Activity Module, chapters will be able to identify those members who have transferred out of the chapter, or who have been dropped for non-renewal, and you can also identify potential and new members for your chapter.

At the recent Federation Training, there was a session to identify these reports and how to use them. Further details can be found on the CA Website, [www.csfnarfe.org/training](http://www.csfnarfe.org/training).

If you go to the NARFE Website, and click on "Officer Resources", the next screen will provide "Online Activity Module (OAM)" and "Online Activity Reports (ORM)". If you look beneath the "Online Activity Module", at the end of paragraph 1, there will be a "**CLICK HERE**". When you click on that link, it will take you to tutorials on how to use the OAM and the various reports, either by printing a .pdf file, or clicking a link to a You Tube video. This will assist you in reaching out to your members.

This might even be an educational feature to show to your Executive Board, as all Chapter Officers have access to read the OAM, but only the President, First Vice President, Secretary, Secretary-Treasurer and Membership Chair have access to change any of the data or prepare an Officer Roster, F-7. Don't forget, your Officer Roster, F-7, needs to be updated with any changes in your officers, addresses, email, phone numbers as they occur – AND every year no later than December 31. The F-7 is the basis for National Headquarters to send pertinent materials to the appropriate officers.