

**MINUTES OF THE 54th ANNUAL STATE CONFERENCE  
SOUTH CAROLINA FEDERATION OF NARFE CHAPTERS  
MARCH 26-28, 2018  
HILTON MYRTLE BEACH RESORT, MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA**

The 54th annual Conference of the South Carolina Federation of NARFE Chapters was held at the Hilton Myrtle Beach Resort Hotel, Myrtle Beach, SC, from March 26-28, 2018. The Myrtle Beach Chapter (Chapter 1015) hosted the conference.

**Monday, March 26, 2018**

President Bob Shear called the members to order and opened the Conference at 4:01 pm on March 26, 2018. Mr. Shear welcomed everyone to the 54th conference. Following the presentation of the colors by the North Myrtle Beach High School JNROTC, Vice President Morgan Hill led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mr. Shear introduced the Conference Chair and President of the Myrtle Beach Chapter, Marci Vogel. Ms. Vogel welcomed members to Myrtle Beach and the conference. Blake Crawford introduced the mayor of Myrtle Beach, Ms. Brenda Bethune, and mentioned that she is the first woman mayor of Myrtle Beach. Mayor Bethune thanked NARFE for inviting her to attend the conference and said that Myrtle Beach is the fastest growing area in the state for retirees. Ms. Vogel thanked the Mayor for attending. She also thanked the federation officers, Joe Arsenault, and the members of Chapter 1015 for their assistance and support in planning and executing the conference.

Mr. Shear recognized the past Federation Presidents in attendance: Margaret Baptiste, Bill Nicol, Jeanette Keepers, and Kathryn Hensley. He also introduced the federation officers at the head table, Region III Vice President Clarence Robinson, and Ken Thomas, candidate for National President. He mentioned that Barbara Sido, NARFE's Executive Director, would be arriving later in the day.

Mr. Shear reviewed the "Rules for the Conduct of Business" on pages 5 and 6 of the conference booklet. As there were no objections, the rules were adopted for use during the meetings.

Mr. Shear introduced Don Myers, a retired military/VA chaplain. Chaplain Myers conducted the Memorial Service for the NARFE members who passed away during the past year. As the names of the deceased members are listed in the conference program, Chaplain Myers asked that chapter members stand in honor of their chapter. At the end of the service, Chaplain Myers, Olivia Williams, Clarence Robinson, Patricia Painter, and Morgan Hill led the members in singing "Amazing Grace." It was noted that 74 South Carolina members died during the past year.

Mr. Shear introduced Olivia Williams, Federation Alzheimer's Coordinator. Ms. Williams thanked everyone for their contributions to Alzheimer's so far this year. She expressed her appreciation to Ruth Donahue, Patrice Merkins, and Mary Sutton for their assistance at the conference.

Mr. Shear introduced Shamyra Parker-Winston, a representative of the Government Employees' Health Association (GEHA). Ms. Parker-Winston discussed the services GEHA offers to Federal employees

and retirees and answered questions from members.

Mr. Shear also introduced Sandy Ward, a representative of Blue Cross/Blue Shield Federal Employees Health Program. Mr. Ward discussed how Blue Cross/Blue Shield works with Medicare and discussed the Medicare Reimbursement Account.

Mr. Shear mentioned that there were several door prizes available courtesy of the corporate sponsors. He stated that the drawings for these prizes would be held on Tuesday throughout the day's meetings.

Mr. Shear introduced Kathryn Hensley, candidate for National Secretary/Treasurer. Ms. Hensley discussed her federal service and NARFE background. She expressed her concern with the one member/one vote and national-only membership issues. She advised everyone to review the articles in the March issue of the NARFE magazine concerning the 52 amendments and resolutions being presented for consideration. Voting on the new officers and the changes will take place between May 10-June 30, 2018. The results will be announced in August at the FEDCON 18 in Jacksonville, FL.

Mr. Shear introduced Ken Thomas, the host of FEDCON 18. He announced that the conference would take place August 26-28, 2018, at the Hyatt Regency in Jacksonville, FL. The hotel conference rate is \$99/night plus \$7 for daily parking. The conference registration fee is \$150 until March 31; it will go up to \$175 after that. There will be 26 training sessions and 14 keynote speakers. In addition, FEDCON's Monday evening entertainment will include the Caribbean Chillers; there will be a gala on Tuesday evening. Other events include the possibility of a pre-season NFL game and additional pre- and post-conference trips.

There will be a National Executive Board meeting prior to the conference on August 23, 2018. There will be a NARFE business meeting at the end of the conference that will include reports by the current national officers. Mr. Thomas expressed hope that we will have the election results and can install our new national officers.

Ms. Williams reminded everyone that the cut-off for turning in raffle tickets would be Tuesday morning at 11 am. Ernest Williams, Federation Political Action Committee (PAC) Officer, asked people interested in contributing to NARFE-PAC to talk to him during the conference.

Mr. Shear stated that Bill Greenhill had asked about the possibility of having a separate meeting of chapter presidents during the federation's executive board meeting. Mr. Shear stated we will do this at the next conference. The chapter presidents will meet separately and then join the executive board meeting.

Mr. Bill Nicol asked about recognizing FBI agents or employees and military personnel from the Korean War or Vietnam.

Mr. Shear reminded everyone that the President's reception would begin at 6:30 pm. Entertainment will be provided by local harpist, Rebecca Nissen. Late arrivals may pick up their registration materials after the meeting. The meeting recessed at 5:16 pm.

## **Tuesday, March 28, 2018**

Mr. Shear called the conference to order at 8:32 am. Federation Past President, Jeanette Keepers, led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Margaret Baptiste, Federal Employee Education and Assistance (FEEA) Fund Coordinator, made a plea for donations to NARFE's Scholarship and Disaster Assistance Funds. She reported that in 2017 South Carolina members donated \$1025 for scholarships and \$3097 for hurricane relief funds. Arlette Thomas, FEEA Coordinator for Region III, was introduced.

Jim Love from AARP was introduced as a conference sponsor. He stated that AARP's focus was on issues involving health, financial security, and caregiving. Harry Brown asked if NARFE advertised in the AARP magazines and/or newsletters. Mr. Love explained how AARP is organized in South Carolina. He stated that anyone can go online to the SC AARP web page and find local meetings. Ms. Baptiste asked if he was aware of an initiative in the 1990s to encourage women to run for local offices. Mr. Love said he was not aware of such a program, but he would check on this. He also reported on the Stand Down program that provides supplies and help to (mostly homeless) veterans. He stated that nearly one quarter of the homeless people in South Carolina are veterans.

Mr. Hill announced that 15 chapters attended the conference.

Mr. Shear introduced Barbara Sido, NARFE Executive Director. Ms. Sido stated that this was her first federation conference. She stated that one of the major efforts of NARFE was advocacy and cited the recent two-year budget agreement that did not include any cuts to federal benefits. Mr. Nicol asked why it was not possible to get the number of active/retired federal employees in each congressional district. Ms. Sido will try to get him that information. It was mentioned that there are misconceptions about federal employees and that we need to find out and correct this misinformation when talking to congressional offices. The NARFE-PAC supports candidates who support NARFE objectives.

Ms. Sido presented a slideshow covering the following items:

- Communication – Improved website/NARFE Magazine
- Federal Benefits Institute – Provides confidential advice on questions/issues
- Webinars – Provides information on current issues to members/non-members
- Public Relations – Provides an organizational presence outside the DC area
- Public Media – Provides a Facebook page
- NARFE Next – Works to keep the organization relevant
- FEDCON 18 – 2018 national meeting in Jacksonville, Florida
- Branding – Provides key to how people perceive the organization
- Centennial – The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary will be in 2021

Ms. Sido responded to questions and comments concerning the WEP/GPO, presence at pre-retirement briefings, local vs national chapter, access to national members, and the lack of chapter membership options on renewal forms. Ms. Sido said members could email her at [execdire@narfe.org](mailto:execdire@narfe.org).

The meeting adjourned for a fifteen-minute break.

Following the break, a drawing was held for door prizes donated by Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

Via video teleconference, the conference attendees participated in a GoToMeeting session on the Grassroots Program with Molly Checksfield. During her presentation, Ms. Checksfield covered the following topics:

- TSP Modernization Act
- Two-Year Bi-Partisan Budget Funding
- Pay Freeze in 2019
- Postal Reform – HR 756//S2629
- NARFE’s Advocacy Department – Creates letters for members to send to Congress on various issues
- Congressional District Leaders/Senate Leaders – Corresponds to local Congressional members
- Taxation on Federal Retirement Pay
- NARFE PAC

A brief question and answer period followed the presentation.

Seven additional door prizes were awarded.

First-time conference attendees were recognized.

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 11:19 am and reconvened at 1:00 pm.

Mr. Shear introduced Emily Constantine and Jay Thomaseck of the Hilton Conference Center and presented them with a certificate of appreciation for their assistance with the conference. Certificates of appreciation were also presented to Pat Whitely, Jeanette Keepers and Robbie Ann White. A special certificate of appreciation was presented to Ms. Whitely for her efforts in tallying the ballots for the federation’s recent election. An announcement was made on behalf of Paul Donahue; he will be conducting a meeting on web site maintenance in the Arcadian 6 meeting room.

A drawing was held for a \$250 travel credit from Road Scholar. This is a non-profit travel agency that was previously known as Elder Hostel

Charlie Griffin gave a brief overview of the Long-Term Care Insurance available to federal employees.

Robbie Ann White was presented with a certificate of appreciation for her work on the bylaws and operating procedures.

Via video teleconference, Bridget Boel, Vice President for Marketing and Member Resources Department, gave a presentation on the responsibilities of her section. The four areas include:

- Federal Benefits Institute -- Webinars
- Membership Marketing – Membership Renewals
- Business Development – Affinity Partners//Member Perks//Event Planning
- Public Relations – Social Media Strategies

Ms. Boel also discussed FEDCON 18. It will offer 30 sessions of information. She mentioned that the annual business meeting will be conducted at the end of FEDCON.

During the question and answer period, Ms. Boel stated that OPM will do two “blind” mailings a year to new annuitants and/or survivors of annuitants concerning NARFE membership. She told members that Monica Williams and her marketing team can help chapters with advertising and marketing materials. This includes a 50/50 match for advertising funds for ads. She also stated that the webinars are bringing in many current employees as a year’s membership is included in the webinar rate for non-members. There are also may “free” items available on the national web site that can be downloaded by anyone.

Six more door prizes were given out. The meeting adjourned for a 20-minute break.

After the break, a five-minute “welcome” video from Richard Thissen, NARFE National President was viewed. He reviewed several accomplishments of the past year.

Brittany Zedlitz, the representative of HearUSA, gave a brief presentation of the AETNA Hearing Care program. It offers access to all hearing aid manufacturers with up to a 50% discount and works with various FEHBP insurances. This is one of the Affinity Partners mentioned earlier; their contact information is on the NARFE website.

Susan Allgood, the AETNA representative, spoke about some of the options AETNA provides for prescriptions and hearing aids.

Clarence Robinson, Region III Vice President, spoke about the changes occurring in NARFE since the 2016 National Convention. These changes include one-member/one-vote and optional chapter membership. These changes have created additional problems that have not been addressed in the bylaws. The National Executive Board has decided to use preferential voting this year. Members may vote online or by paper ballot in the NARFE magazine. He also asked everyone to recruit one additional member.

Ken Thomas, a candidate for National President, spoke about his ideas. He feels that the structure of the organization needs to change to meet the current issues. With the hiring of an Executive Director, he feels that NARFE’s President should be on Capitol Hill addressing the issues that affect us as current and former employees. He feels we need a strategic plan and a business structure to support it.

Frank Painter distributed a presentation on the role of the Area Vice President (former District Field Officer). He gave a brief report on the status of the various chapters and possible closures and/or mergers.

Pat Whitely gave a presentation on the role of the Service Officer. The manual for this position is available online on the NARFE website. She gave several examples of additional forms available on the website that would aid all members.

Clara Gillentine gave a membership report. We currently have 1552 chapter members in the state and 1082 national members. In the last year, 536 members have transferred to national. Mr. Brown suggested placing the chapter transfer form on the website.

The conference recessed at 4:37 pm. Mr. Shear reminded everyone that the banquet will start at 6:30 pm.

### **Banquet Notes – Tuesday, March 27, 2018**

The banquet convened at 6:30 pm.

Mr. Shear introduced the head table guests: Kathy Hensley, Margaret Baptiste, Jane Shear, Marci Vogel, Barbara Sido, Dorothy Robinson, and Clarence Robinson.

Following the buffet dinner, Mr. Shear recognized the previous winners of the Judy Kemp Award in attendance: Bill Nicol, Kathy Hensley, and Bob Muller. He also recognized the selection committee for this year's award: John Geiger, Bill Nicol, and Bob Muller. He then presented the 2017 Judy Kemp Award for Distinguished Service to Paul Donahue from Columbia Chapter 87.

Ms. Williams, Alzheimer's Coordinator, reported that as of February 28, 2018, NARFE chapters have raised a total of \$12,642,264.58 towards our goal of raising \$13 million by December 31, 2018. She reminded members that the Longest Day will be June 21, 2018, and that November is National Alzheimer's/ Caregivers Month. She presented Certificates of Outstanding Services to Rhoda Bullock, Frank Stevens, Wayne White, Betty Wessinger, Karen Bostian, Linda Kossow, Robert Hill, Mary Sarver, Jeanette Keepers, and Julia Coates. She thanked all chapters for contributions during the period of April 2016 through March 31, 2017. The SC Chapters together raised a total of \$8,551.90.

#### **Highest amount raised from Chapters for April 1, 2017 through March 31, 2018:**

- 1st Place – Myrtle Beach Chapter #1015
- 2nd Place – Columbia Chapter #87
- 3rd Place – Pawleys Island Chapter #1958

#### **Highest Amount raised for 50/50 Drawing:**

- 1st Place – Columbia Chapter #87
- 2nd Place – Beaufort Chapter #1021
- 3rd Place – Summerville Chapter#1082

#### **Report on the 50/50 Drawing and Winners:**

- |  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| • 1 <sup>st</sup> place – Blake Crawford   | \$409.75           |
| • 2 <sup>nd</sup> place – Mary Sutton      | \$204.88           |
| • 3 <sup>rd</sup> place – Patricia Whitely | \$204.87           |
| • 4 <sup>th</sup> Place – John Thompson    | Donated Door Prize |

Ms. Williams also extended thanks to all the Chapter Alzheimer's Coordinators, chapters, and all attendees for continued support of this very meaningful and worthwhile project.

## Wednesday, March 29, 2018

Mr. Shear reconvened the conference at 8:33 am.

Mr. Donahue, Federation Historian, presented Chapter Anniversary Certificates to the following:

- Summerville 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- Clemson 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- Pawley's Island 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Kathryn Hensley, Federation Treasurer, presented the Federation Treasurer Report and revised budget for the period of May 2016 through March 2017. She stated that as of March 27, 2017 there is \$31,514.98 in the federation treasury and \$5.03 in the savings account. She urged members to continue to recruit new members as the Federation receives 10% of the annual dues amount from National Headquarters for each new or renewing member. Ms. Hensley also stated that satisfactory audits were conducted of both the federation and the 2016 conference's financial records on January 19, 2017.

Mr. Shear called the Federation Executive Board meeting to order at 8:41 am. The first item on the agenda was the 2019 conference site. Chapter 87 has volunteered to hold the conference in Columbia. Due to the issue with parking, the conference committee will go out for bids for meetings. Mr. Nicol made a motion to accept Columbia as the site; Ms. Williams seconded the motion. The motion passed. To ensure that the planning committee has input from members, attendees were asked to complete a conference evaluation sheet. Next year's conference dates may change to May; the hotel prices have an impact on the dates. Ms. Hensley asked if attendees would be willing to pay a higher registration fee if lunch on Tuesday is included.

Ms. White distributed a handout on the Clemson chapter's Advocacy Month. The chapter invited local political representatives to a meeting in August during the congressional break. They used materials from the Federation Legislative Chair concerning SC issues. Following the meeting, the chapter sent an after-action report to National Headquarters.

Ms. Hensley distributed the proposed budget and reimbursement forms to attendees. She stated that the year-end report is not complete. As of February 2018, the checking account reconciled with the books. She reviewed the proposed 2018 budget. Mr. Nicol made a motion to approve the budget; Ms. White seconded the motion. In the ensuing discussion, Mr. Shear reported that the Board approved awarding two grants of \$125 each to chapters to encourage members to attend the conference for the first time. There was a total of 16 grants made to 7 chapters. In a different discussion, the per capita dues were discussed. It was pointed out that national members do not pay per capita dues. Mr. Nicol made a motion to suspend the payment of the 2019 per capita dues; Ms. Keepers seconded the motion. The motion was approved. Ms. White made a motion to accept the budget. Mr. Huisman asked that we be given a budget with actual figures in it. Ms. Hensley stated that she would work with the new treasurer to update the budget and mail it out to members.

Mr. Shear reported that the updated operating guidelines are not done; the document is over 50 pages long and is designed to supplement the bylaws. He thanked Ms. White for the work she has done on the contents. The draft document has been sent to Larry Shaft and Ned Adams for their comments. It will be distributed to the membership for comments before it is implemented.

A discussion was held on potential chapter closures. Pawley's Island may merge with Myrtle Beach; Anderson may merge with Clemson; Camden may merge with Columbia. The Area Vice Presidents will assist the chapters with the possible consolidations.

Mr. Shear mentioned he would be making committee appointments after the installation of the 2018-2019 officers. He expressed the hope that the current chairs would continue in their positions or think of people who would be a good replacement.

Mr. Thomas reminded everyone about FEDCON 18. He stated that there was a room block of 650 rooms. He reported that the king beds in the block of rooms have all been reserved. The remaining rooms will have two queen beds. Additional king bed rooms are available but not at the conference price.

Ms. Whitely requested the names of the chapter service officers and presidents be given to her.

Mr. Williams announced that he had received \$375 for the NARFE PAC at the conference.

Mr. Brown made a motion to adjourn the Executive Board meeting; Mr. Huisman seconded the motion. The Board meeting was adjourned.

Mr. Huisman made a motion to approve the minutes of the 2017 Federation Convention. The minutes were approved.

Joe Kohut, the new membership chairperson, gave several suggestions for recruiting new members. He will post these ideas on the federation web site.

Region III Vice President Robinson administered the oath of office to the new Executive Board officers. The new officers are:

President	Robert Shear
Vice President	Blaine Lotz
Secretary	Clara Gillentine
Treasurer	Betty Hawkins

Mr. Shear adjourned the conference at 10:32 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Currie  
Federation Secretary