



**NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED FEDERAL
EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION/MEUNIER-PERRY
CHAPTER 1015
MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA
September 2020 NEWSLETTER-ISSUE 8**

**Message from the President
Blake Crawford**

VOTE:

The national election is coming, and we all know how important it is to vote this year.

We must vote to preserve our democracy, the rights and responsibilities that come with it, and the health of our Nation.

As Federal retirees or employees, we must also raise our voices to protect our earned retirement and health benefits from the attacks of the last four years.

There are several ways to vote: at your precinct on Election Day, Nov.3; via mail by absentee ballot; or in-person by absentee ballot. In Horry County, you can vote absentee in-person at the Conway elections office or one of three satellite offices that will begin operations in October. Ballot drop boxes also can be used Mon-Fri., 8-5 in Conway, and 8:30-4 at the satellites.

Don't wait. Apply for your ballot now if you are planning to vote absentee. Getting an absentee ballot is not automatic. In South Carolina, you must file an application for a ballot first. You can download the application from the web or call or visit the elections office. Cite one of the official reasons why you are asking for a ballot. Sign and return your application to the elections office. The COVID-19 emergency can be cited by any eligible voter who requests an absentee ballot.

Act early because mail may be slow. We've all seen the stories about what may be happening to our postal services in the name of "efficiency."

Continued: Message from the President

Several excellent information sources can help you make your plan.

scVotes.gov is the state's official voter education website with a wealth of information. It also maintains a related site, NoExcusesSC.com which covers touchless voting, staying safe at the polls, how to vote absentee, and more.

The Horry County Chapter of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) also does an excellent job of tracking changes and answering questions.

Here's a tip from AAUW: Download your sample ballot from scVotes.gov and take it with you to the polls. Compare what you see on the machine to your sample ballot to make sure your machine has the right ballot. If they differ, raise the question. You get one do-over after a "spoiled" ballot.

Here are some key deadlines for voting in Horry County:

Sept. 28: In-Person Absentee voting begins – at Conway only.

Oct. 2: Last day to register for the November elections.

Oct. 5: Absentee Mail Ballots (Not In-Person) are mailed out to those who filed applications.

Oct. 5: Satellite offices begin absentee voting operations: Call to confirm sites: the satellite offices are expected to be at the Carolina Forest Library and the South Strand and North Strand Recreation Centers.

Nov. 3: Election Day: In-Person voting in your precinct.

For Georgetown County, contact: Georgetown County Board of Voter Registration & Elections, 303 N. Hazard Street, Georgetown SC 29440, (843) 545-3339, 8:30 am – 5 pm.

For Horry County, contact: Horry County Voters Registration and Elections: 1515 Fourth Avenue, Conway, SC 29526, Phone: (843) 915-5440, M-F, 8 am – 5 pm. No excuses.

Legislative Officer/Service Officer

Sherry Gainer

It is hard to believe that we are entering the 7th month of the pandemic. I hope that you and your families are well, and you have found some ways to enjoy--or at least endure-- this strange new life that we are living. How great it will be to get together again and enjoy the lovely view and lunch at Damon's, whenever that may be!

Items of Note

- **Open Season: will begin November 9 and run until December 14 this year. OPM will offer 2 new dental plans and 1 new vision plan. Of course, the premiums are expected to rise.**

<https://www.fedweek.com/fedweek/fedvip-to-add-plans-no-word-yet-on-fehb-offerings/>
<https://www.myfederalretirement.com/fehb-open-season/>

- **The 2021 COLA will be based on the monthly changes in July, August and September; so far only July has been tabulated with a 1% increase. August should be out soon. The COLA is based on CPI-W, not CPI-E which is the index for elderly people.**

<https://www.myfederalretirement.com/fers-csrs-cola-watch/>

- **Additional coronavirus relief is currently at impasse in Congress, and the President has made some Executive Orders but none that have an impact on most of us. The Payroll Tax deferment will only apply to earned income, and not affect pensions and annuities. At present, any tax amounts not collected in 2020 will be repaid in 2021 so it is not a freebie.**

<https://www.govexec.com/pay-benefits/2020/09/lawmakers-demand-answers-payroll-tax-deferral-and-more/168197/>

Continued: Legislative Officer

Legislative Activity

Congress is mired in Coronavirus right now, but still no resolution on any relief soon. It is looking like the next bill will lower the income level for the stimulus payments (like the \$1200 we received in April) and concentrate on unemployed and those in lower income brackets. Both sides are adding items not related to coronavirus relief and causing lack Of agreement. In addition, USPS is finally getting lots of attention but still no money!

It is looking like most of the bills we support will once again languish and disappear at the end of this 116th Congress on January 3, 2021.

COLA Bills

HR 1254--Equal COLA Act for FERS and CSRS

Use same COLA for both FERS and CSRS pensions; adding co-sponsors, no further action

▪ **HR 1553--Fair COLA for Seniors Act**

Use CPI-E for certain government programs; adding co-sponsors, no further action

WEP/GPO Bills

▪ **HR 4540--Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act**

Repeal WEP; adding co-sponsors, no further action

▪ **S 3401--The Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act of 2020**

Repeal WEP; in committee

▪ **HR 3934--Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act of 2019**

Eliminate WEP; adding co-sponsors, no further action

▪ **HR 141--Social Security Fairness Act of 2019**

Eliminate GPO/WEP; adding co-sponsors, no further action.

Other Issues

▪ **HJ Resolution 7-- repeal electoral college and allow direct election of the president and vice president**

Some sponsors, no further action

▪ **HJ Resolution 20--sets term limits for Congressional positions**

Some sponsors, no further action.

Sunshine/Membership

Lynn Vos

Upcoming Happy Birthdays for

September

Anne Cwalina, Charlotte Downey, Joseph Sam Quade, Alice Villavicencio

Sunshine Grins-of-the-Month:

- Better to be silent and thought a fool than to speak up and remove all doubt.
- I'm sorry; did I roll my eyes out loud?
- I get my cardio by running from responsibility.
- Another fine day ruined by responsibility.

Books I know you will enjoy. Educational, entertaining, amusing, thought-provoking, horrifying, 'I-never-knew-that' stuff, such as:

The Vile and the Splendid, by Eric Larson - A fresh, compelling portrait of Winston Churchill and London during the WWII blitz and how Churchill's leadership taught the Brits the art of sacrifice and fearlessness, often at personal peril. Drawing on diaries, archival documents and once-secret intelligence reports only recently released, Larson provides a new lens on London's darkest times when, in the face of unrelenting horror, Churchill's eloquence, courage and perseverance bound a country together while strategizing and convincing the United States to participate as its ally. Fascinating insight into his daily life and decision making.

The Mystery of Charles Dickens, by A.N. Wilson - Brand new - 'It was the best of times; it was the worst of times'...sound familiar? Charles Dickens authored some of the most beloved characters in literature, perhaps because he was also one of them. Filled with twists, pathos and unusual characters, the book follows Dickens from cradle to grave and shows that his fiction is based on experience. He knew firsthand the poverty and pain of his characters like Oliver Twist and his wretched childhood. His death at a fairly youngish age may have been caused by flu complications??? Hmmm...

Continued: Sunshine/Membership

Well, from the vile, the splendid, the mystery, to horror and silliness of Stephen King. What more can be said? Newest book of his:

If It Bleeds - split into four fearful tales, King's remarkable range is on full display. King's great concern is evil, which he always shows us, and it's opposite - friendship, which is not only life-affirming but can be lifesaving. Sometimes King's ability to describe pure joy rivals his ability to terrify us. In any event, his writing style consistently pulls us in, like moths to a flame.

If you're not reading, you are missing out on one of the great joys of life. So READ!!!! It's not a chore; it's a delight - right???

**Cheerio,
Lynn**

Newsletter Editor

Billie Nichols

Calendar of Events

September 2020-No meetings

**December 2020-Annual Chapter
1015 Christmas Party-TBD**

***All events are subject to change**



Dene Tothill Nichols
Where were you????

It was a beautiful morning on **11 September 2001**. My husband and I had just finished a gourmet breakfast from McDonald's and were leisurely headed home in the car when news came over the radio. A plane had crashed into the World Trade Center Building in New York. I thought it was bound to happen to one of those tall buildings sooner or later. What a terrible accident! And, then another plane crashed into its twin. We quickly drove home and turned on the television news. My husband said: "We are under attack!" By that time, the terrorist had crashed into the Pentagon with still another plane. Alas, my home away from home was up in smoke! It was like someone had taken a bite out of it. A very big bite. There were rumors that the attackers thought it was the White House which was their intended target.

We lived about 25 miles from the Pentagon where I had spent most of my career for close to 20 years. To clarify, let me give you some idea of the layout of the Pentagon. It had 10 corridors going around the perimeter and five inner rings, A, B, C, D, E (E being the outside ring where the big wigs had their offices). The E Ring had the only offices that could receive television reception at that time. The Heliport was outside the Third Corridor, E Ring. There are five floors and several subfloors where military files, printing presses, and an operation center are located.

In the center of these 10 corridors is an outdoor Center Court that sold fast food choices where you could relax and eat lunch. It was bounded by huge Magnolia trees and mounds of Ivy.

Continued: Dene Tothill Nichols

That being said. The plane hit the Pentagon between the Third and Fifth Corridor, E Ring. Apparently, when the workers heard about the World Trade Center crashes they rushed to the E Ring to watch television news. Many of those workers in the Third thru Fifth Corridor, E Ring, didn't make it. Others tell stories of crawling over debris to reach the Center Court. One lady in the C Ring said she, out of force of habit, brought her backpack with her while she struggled to get through debris searching for an area where there was clean air. Strange how habit clicks in even during a crisis such as this. She wound up in the hospital for months recovering from smoke inhalation. Many of the workers who survived hurriedly walked to the city of Alexandria mostly in fear of an additional attack.

There was an eerie silence throughout that infamous day. No transportation! The really weird thing was the silence. No planes overhead. No telephone service even as far away as to where we lived. My son was in DC and he called his wife at the State Department and told her to get out of there.

Terror was in the air!

A week later I visited an old friend with a terrible wound (The Pentagon).

Unbelievable!



Alzheimer's Research Officer

Alice Villavicencio

TIP FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2020

PLEASE GET YOUR FLU VACCINATION EARLY

An Alzheimer's Association press release recently reported on the Alzheimer's Association International Conference held on July 27, 2020. In part, the press release stated that scientific evidence showed that influenza (flu) and pneumonia vaccinations are associated with reducing the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. Specifically, the release stated that some types of flu vaccines are associated with reducing Alzheimer's by 13 to 17 percent. The pneumonia vaccine, which is recommended by medical professionals for persons 65 to 75 years of age, also was associated with reducing incidents of Alzheimer's by as much as 40 percent depending on a person's genetic composition. In addition, persons with Alzheimer's disease have a higher risk of dying after contracting an infection (like the flu or pneumonia) than persons that are dementia-free.

https://www.alz.org/aaic/releases_2020/vaccines-dementia-risk.asp

In our last Chapter 1015 Meeting, some members purchased tickets for the 50/50 Cash Drawing that was to be held at the 2020 South Carolina Federation Conference, but neither the Conference nor the drawing took place because of the COVID-19 health-safety risks associated with having a large number of persons in attendance. However, there is still time to buy tickets (through October 1, 2020). You may get tickets by emailing me at amvalvil24@outlook.com, calling or leaving a text message to 202-560-0196. Please provide your name, address, and telephone number, so I can confirm with you the number of tickets you want, and write your name and phone on the tickets, then send you the matching stubs.

Because we physically are not seeing one another in the immediate future, I ask that you send me a bank draft (check), or money order,

Continued: Alzheimer's Research Officer

payable to me: Alice Villavicencio. At the comment line of the check write "SC Fed ALZ Drawing 2020." My address is 1001 University Forest Drive, Conway, SC 29526. I, in turn, will send you the ticket stubs for you to keep until the drawing which will be held virtually at the next Chapter 1015 Executive Meeting in October 2020. (Please make sure that you give me your phone number, so I can write it on the portion of the ticket that will be drawn.)

The Alzheimer's Walk will be held on November 7, 2020. We will not be walking at a specific location. You can walk in your neighborhood, or any other place you choose, or you can choose not to walk. Just register as a participant and donate at <https://act.alz.org/site/TR/Walk>. Once you reach that site, click on 2020 Walk to End Alzheimer's. That page will state: Search to Donate. Click on Team Name Box and type NARFE 1015 (leave a space between the E in NARFE and 1015) that will take you to the Donate Page. There, Click on NARFE 1015 and my name will appear under that Caption, Click there for the team Page of NARFE 1015. Scroll to donate to NARFE 1015 and join the Team and/or register. You may donate by check or credit card. Our Team goal is \$1,000.00 and our Page goal is \$150.00. If you donate \$100.00 or more by October 7, 2020, you will receive a Logo Tee Shirt from the Alzheimer's Association. Be sure to indicate your size when prompted. Please give and be part of the NARFE 1015 TEAM and the World Team that, that through donations toward scientific research, are vital parts in finding a solution to End Alzheimer's. If you have been following my articles, you can see for yourselves how much more we now know about the disease than we knew in past years or even months. Scientists have made advances in research to better understand the disease and in producing medications that slow the progression of the disease because people like you donate generously to the cause - END ALZHEIMER'S.