



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Blake Crawford

A Light at the End of the Tunnel?

In South Carolina, 29.7% of our citizenry had received at least one COVID-19 vaccine and 15.9% had completed their vaccinations, as of March 26. That's about 1.2 million people who have had one shot and 650,000 who have completed the series. Is that a light at the end of the tunnel?

Maybe. But a lot of people are still unprotected. We're making real progress, but we're relaxing COVID-related restrictions here and around the country at a time when we still have a long way to go.

In a March 29 White House briefing, CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky pointed to recent rises in the 7-day average of daily new cases and in hospitalizations across the US and concluded "Right now, I'm scared."

So, let's not take our ultimate success for granted just yet.

Caution should still be the watchword: Wearing masks, avoiding medium-to large-sized gatherings, avoiding poorly ventilated spaces, and staying 6 feet away from others is still important until more people are vaccinated. CDC has an excellent fact sheet titled "[When You've Been Fully Vaccinated: How to Protect Yourself and Others.](#)" which lays out what you can do after receiving the vaccine ... and what to avoid now.

We have avoided in-person NARFE chapter meetings for the past 12-months and continue to do so. At our last executive committee meeting, which was and will continue to be open to all chapter members, the general sentiment was that not all of our members have been vaccinated, and, even among those who have, many feel they will not be comfortable with a Damon's-style restaurant luncheon before September.

Continued: President's Message

This year, we've kept our newsletter going for all but the month of July although we normally close it down in both July and August.

We're trying to start a more active Zoom meeting schedule. We've offered training. We could use more participants. Our membership has remained stable, but the number of active members who have joined the Zoom call has lagged behind our prior, in-person meeting attendance. Our March Zoom meeting drew 14 participants, compared to our usual 25 plus at Damon's.

COVID aside, there's plenty for NARFE to do. The magazine this month is asking NARFE members to contact their Washington representatives to support H.R. 82, the Social Security Fairness Act, which would fully repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset, which adversely affect the Social Security benefits of Federal retirees.

Similarly, it's asking for our active support for H.R. 304, the Equal COLA Act, which would provide FERS retirees the same cost of living adjustment as CSRS retirees.

How long have these issues – GPO, WEP, and unequal COLAs – been a thorn in your side? Time to raise them again with a new Congress?

Visit www.narfe.org/advocacy and click on the Legislative Action Center to see what NARFE recommends. We should write to our congressional and senate representatives now about these and other issues.

Let's be productive during the remainder of our COVID-19 hiatus. That way we make sure that the light we see at the end on the tunnel is really blue sky, not an oncoming train.

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Continued: President's Message

Blaine Lotz, president of the South Carolina NARFE Federation, will discuss the future of NARFE and install chapter officers at the next NARFE Chapter 1015 meeting on April 15, 2021. It will be an executive committee meeting open to all chapter members and will be held via Zoom beginning at 11 am.



Newsletter Editor

Billie Nichols

**Chapter 1015 membership as of
April 7=145**

**Prospective New Members based on
AMS M-112 Report**

Fran Baldassare, Mary Connell,

Sharon Taylor

Vice-President

Marci Vogel

It's that time again! Spring has sprung. It's time to get your glad rags out of moth balls and get back into life. It's almost time to socialize, six feet apart, that is. Life is good and so is Zoom! See you on the computer screen!

CALL FOR MEMBERS

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US IN CHAPTER MEETINGS BY ZOOM

Already some of the SC NARFE chapters have started conducting their meetings by Zoom. This month again I am calling on you as members to join us online to participate in our upcoming Zoom virtual General Meeting on Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 11:00 AM. The bottom line is that we may not see each other in person at Damon's for a long time and as a result we must go virtual. I want to encourage you to join us at this manageable way to start having our chapter meetings. The Chapter General Meeting held March 18 was promising and we had very good attendance. Therefore, for the General Meeting scheduled Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 11:00 AM a link will be sent to you by email on Wednesday April 14, 2021 with instructions on how to be included in this meeting. Please wait until at least 10:45 AM, Thursday April 15 to click on this invite to the meeting.

We have some very talented and qualified Zoom members who will assist you in signing-on to the Zoom virtual meetings in the event you experience some difficulty. We have also tentatively planned for subsequent meetings to be conducted on Thursday May 20 at 11:00 AM.

**If you are interested please RSVP
Billie Nichols, at 843-839-0598 or [email-
billie.nichols1@sccoast.net](mailto:billie.nichols1@sccoast.net)
or via email to Blake Crawford at
blcrawford.29526@outlook.com**

Sunshine/Membership

Lynn Vos

April



**Cherie Chapman, Richard Cullerton, Sue Day,
Camille Todor,**

**Constantine Verenes, Thomas Vissman,
and Marci Vogel**

Sunshine Grins- of- the- Month are:

- . **“It’s funny. All you have to do is say something nobody understands and they’ll do anything you want them to.” J.D. Salinger**

- . **The advantage of being a pessimist is that any surprise a pessimist gets is a pleasant one while an optimist gets nothing but unpleasant ones.**

- . **Imitation is the sincerest form of television.**

- . **“Facts do not cease to exist just because we chose to ignore them.” Aldous Huxley**

- . **Don’t break anyone’s heart. They only have one - break their bones, instead. They have 206 of those things!**

- . **There is a fine line between a numerator and a denominator. Only a fraction of people will figure that one out.**

- . **Singing in the shower is all fun and games until you get shampoo in your mouth. Then it becomes a soap opera.**

- . **John has 32 candy bars. He eats 28 of them. Now what does he have? Diabetes, of course!**

Continued: Sunshine/Membership Sunshine Books-of-the-Month -

. Someone We Know: by Shari Lapena

Page-turning, nail-biting farce of a novel about an arrogant, stupid, selfish teenager and, yes, there are still such beasts in this cancel culture society, who has fun breaking into neighbors’ houses, just for the heck of it...hm,,, maybe you don’t know YOUR neighbors as well as you think you do...Lots of surprise secrets and red herrings unfold from behind closed doors. Why does he do it? Does he get caught? What does he do in those homes? Does he find anything? What are the fallouts? Oooohhh wouldn’t want to live in THAT neighborhood. BTW, if you enjoy her tale telling, Shari has written others, which I will critique sometime. All different with twists and turns so they keep you pulled in.

. Taken: by Stephen King

Another teenage horror story. What is it with these teens? Great fodder...This teen can see the dead! Surprised? Of course not, this is Stephen King, after all, y’all. King’s writing always reels in his readers, and though readers realize they are ensnared, they continue to take the bait.

. Agent Sonya: by Ben Macintyre

TRUE intrigue, this time about a SOVIET mother of three who left them behind in a quiet little English village to spy for the Soviet Union. She was a high ranking Red Army colonel, whose husband was also. She was hunted by the Chinese government, the Japanese police, the Nazis, MI5, MI6 and the FBI but evaded them all. Lots of photos provided. The best-selling author also wrote “The Spy and the Traitor”, “A Spy Among Friends”, “Double Cross”, “Operation Mincemeat”, “Agent Zigzag”, and “Rogue Heroes”.

Legislative Officer

Sherry Gainer

Happy April..by now you should have received your stimulus money from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, and hopefully your vaccines, too, along with almost 100 million other Americans. And we have another month to file our taxes, as the 2020 tax deadline has been extended to May 17.

So far there has not been much activity in the legislation we are watching:

- **Federal Pay and Benefits**
 - **H.R. 392: FAIR Act, to provide 3.2% pay raise to federal employees, referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Reform**

- **Support Reform/Repeal of WEP/GPO**
 - **H.R. 82: Social Security Fairness Act of 2021 (Jan 4, 2021)—seeks to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the GPO and WEP; referred to the Committee on Ways and Means**
 - **H.R. 2337: Rep. Richard Neal has reintroduced H.R. 4540 Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act, which was not acted upon in the 116th Congress; it would recalculate and reduce the WEP reduction**

Continued: Legislative Officer

- **Support Accurate COLA for Retirees**
 - **H.R. 304: Equal COLA Act—would guarantee that FERS and CSRS retirees would receive the same COLA increases, using the CPI-W (for Wages, not CPI-E for Elderly) Referred to House Committee on Ways and Means**

- **USPS--Protect Postal Retiree Health Benefits**
 - **The USPS Fairness Act, (S.145 and H.R.695) to eliminate the prefunding mandate for retiree health insurance premiums; supporters are optimistic for passage during this Congress.**
 - **H.R. 47: Would prevent USPS from being privatized**

Be sure to keep in touch with our senators and representative by using the NARFE Action Center.

<https://new.narfe.org/advocacy/legislative-action-center/>

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