

NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES  
SAN FRANCISCO CHAPTER 65  
**SENTINEL**

HERMAN BRACEY, EDITOR

Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday each month, FOB 90 – 7<sup>th</sup> Street; SF; Lower Level Room B-040

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**JANUARY 2010 NEWSLETTER**

OUR NEXT MEETING IS ON JANUARY 20, 2009 AT FOB, 90 7TH ST,  
**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 10:30 AM; 11TH FLOOR RM 11010**  
**GENERAL MEETING 1:00 PM - LOWER LEVEL - "RM B 40"**  
**PHOTO ID REQUIRED TO ENTER BUILDING.**

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

JAN 20 REGULAR MEETING-USING ELECTRONIC MEDIA TO ADVOCATE FOR NARFE  
FEB 17 REGULAR MEETING/PROGRAM TBA  
AUG 29-SEP 2 NARFE 31ST BIENNIAL NATIONAL CONVENTION, GRAND RAPIDS, MI

**PRESIDENT: Jerry HALL, 229 De Montfort Ave, SF, CA 94112; 412-0488, fritz1313@hotmail.com**

**GREETINGS AND CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL CHAPTER MEMBERS WITH BIRTHDAYS AND/OR ANNIVERSARIES IN JANUARY..** I am humbled and honored to take on the responsibilities of President for the coming year. I want to work hard with enthusiasm and commitment to live up to the responsibility and trust that you have placed in me. Moreover, I want to thank Jane for her leadership and dedication as your president over the past years. I am also pleased to have so many members who have volunteered to take on other responsibilities to make our Chapter 65 a success this coming year. Chapter 65 is your Chapter and working together we can continue to make it a Great Chapter. But it takes all of us working together. May I also encourage any of you who would like to be more active, to contact me so we can discuss how you can make a contribution that is mutually beneficial to you and Chapter 65.

As you may know, I have placed a lot of emphasis on the recruitment of new members. NARFE is for all Federal employees, active and retired. Yet the percent of Active Federal Employees is very small compared to those of us who have retired. Many active employees don't even know what NARFE is and that it is working regularly on their behalf. There are no guarantees, no written contracts between us (both active and retired) and the federal government in regards to our retirement and its benefits. We NARFE members must be ever vigilant and have been since 1921 to protect the benefits we have earned or are earning. A strong and active group with growing numbers will have a better chance of retaining and improving these benefits. Thus, it is in the interest of all of us to recruit and grow our membership. Please make it your goal to recruit at least one new member this year. I will regularly be giving you ideas at our meetings about how to be successful in recruiting this year. Each of us has to see recruitment as part of our membership responsibility.

Furthermore, I encourage you to stay connected to NARFE. NARFE is extremely active on your behalf. If you are not receiving weekly updates via email from NARFE, please email me your email address and I will get it added to the national list. These updates keep you informed about the issues NARFE is addressing and occasionally they will ask you to send an email to your representatives in Congress to ensure that they don't take us for granted. Additionally, our Chapter 65 has a great Website at <http://www.narfe65.org/> supported and made possible by our members, Dianne Joseph and Martha Raup. Nationally, our website <http://www.narfe.org/> is regularly updated with the latest releases and information affecting members. Certainly visiting each site once a month, if you have internet access, is a way to keep connected and a way to show your commitment as a member. If you take your membership for granted, then the federal benefits you have or hope for are also taken for granted.

Finally, please make every effort to attend our upcoming meeting at the new San Francisco Federal Building, 90 Seventh Street (a half block from the MUNI and BART Civic Center Stops), Room B-040, at 1:00 PM on January 20<sup>th</sup>, where you will get a chance to see old friends and meet new ones. Normally our meetings have a short NARFE meeting segment and a presentation that is of interest. The whole program lasts approximately one hour. This month's program will include a presentation on staying connected electronically to NARFE and how to make your voice heard in Washington. Please feel free to request presentation topics and areas of interest that you would like to see addressed at our meetings.

**CAN YOUR BENEFITS BE REDUCED OR EVEN ELIMINATED?**

***The answer is yes; it takes just a simple act of Congress.*** Every year Congress generates a federal budget that sets forth total levels of spending. Funding for our federal benefits is dependent on this process. It's important to know that Congress has the power to make changes to federal benefits at any time. Here are some of the federal employee/retiree benefit-cutting options the Congressional Budget Office, CBO provided to Congress for trimming costs in the Fiscal Year 2008 Budget and reducing the deficit:

***Reduction to Health Benefits:*** Proposed shifting a growing share of Health Insurance to Workers and Retirees; also requiring certain future retirees to pay more for their FEHBP Premiums.

***Reduction to Annuities:*** Proposed to cut annuities by basing them on highest four or five years of salary; also base COLAs on some alternative measure to cut the Cost of Living Adjustments. **(Over)**

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JANUARY 2010

### **"NARFE - Your Voice in Congress"**

Visit **OUR CHAPTER 65 WEB SITE:** (<http://www.narfe65.org>) for more *Chapter information, photos, archived newsletter, etc.* **NATIONAL WEB SITE:** (<http://www.narfe.org>); **CSFC WEB SITE:** (<http://www.csfcnarfe.org>)  
**NARFE DUES:** Currently National Dues are \$29.00 and Chapter 65 Dues are \$8.00 annually. Mail check for the full \$37.00, along with your **DUES RENEWAL NOTICE**, when you receive it, to NARFE, Membership Services, 606 Washington St, Alexandria, Va. 22314-1914.

#### **SERVICE OFFICER: DAVID GARCIA 510 235-7750**

**Important numbers:** OPM 1-888-767-6738 (Administrative Problems); NARFE 1-800-456-8410 (Membership Problems); SOCIAL SECURITY 1-800-772-1213 (Life Cycle Problems ); LTC 1-800 582-3337 (For Applications and Information Kits); OPM Toll Number 1-724-794-5216.

#### **SUNSHINE: EDITH HIGA; 566-7358**

Our prayers and condolences to the families of: ***Edwin B Barry, Beatrice M Fleming and Mary T Scanlon.***

#### **MEMBERSHIP: HERMAN BRACEY, 651 COLE ST APT 2, SF, CA. 94117; 668-2337**

A warm Welcome to: ***Kenneth Foronda, Joan Hall, Ronald K Hiraga, John Mansfield, Sonja Schultz and Rolene Walker.*** We also Welcome ***Joseph Chianese and Jon Lampman*** who recently transferred into Chapter 65. Additionally, we thank ***Ruth V Apana and Antonio E Duran*** for reinstating their membership.

#### **BENEFITS (continued):**

***Reduction to TSP:*** Proposed to require workers to double their TSP contribution to receive full employer match.

***Reduction to Salaries:*** Proposed to increase employee's contribution to the Retirement Fund.

While none of these options were adopted in this year's budget, these proposals continue to be put forward. Federal health care and retirement benefits are always vulnerable, particularly with a budget deficit. ***NARFE's lobbying efforts have been indispensable in preventing Congress from taking action against your retirement income.***

#### **LEGISLATION: BEATRICE BERTWELL, 650-834-7493**

As a result of the current fiscal crisis, the statutory limit on the public debt must be raised in order for the Treasury to raise cash to pay the government's bills. If the Senate approves an already passed House provision, the President would sign the bill into law and our government could continue to function. However, some Senators are withholding their support for the debt limit increase until the Senate leadership agrees to include a proposal to create a commission to address the rising federal debt and budget deficit. Indeed, some Senators recently testified at a Budget Committee hearing that Congress cannot solve the budget problems using the regular legislative process. Instead, they have proposed that a special commission with expedited procedures, similar to the base closing process known as BRAC, to quickly enact one or more deficit reduction packages.

The commission's spending and tax recommendations would be converted into legislation which the House and Senate would be required to consider on an up or down vote without amendment. Consequently, if the commission suggested that federal civilian annuity cost-of-living adjustments or other features of federal retirement be cut, there would be no way for federal-friendly lawmakers to remove the objectionable provisions. What's more, legislators would be under tremendous political pressure to vote for the commission's recommendations in the interest of reducing the trillion dollar federal budget deficit. Our President, Margaret Baptiste, is asking us to urge our two Senators to oppose a proposal that could reduce our earned Federal annuity and health benefits. To make this easy, go to the Legislative Action Center on the NARFE website at <http://capwiz.com/narfe/issues/alert/?alertid=14454086>.

***Results of the NARFE Dues Referendum:*** Our members have spoken: 65.41 percent voted for, and 34.59 percent voted against. Having failed to receive the necessary two-thirds majority of votes cast, the referendum was defeated. We mailed 1,508 ballots to our chapters and delegates-at-large. Out of this total of 1,508, 224 ballots were invalid (wrong number of votes, no signatures, etc.), and 256 ballots were not returned.

***HAPPY NEW YEAR!***