



# NARFE

National Active and Retired Federal  
Employees Association

## Edmond Chapter 947

# INFORMER

Vol. 11 No. 4

November-December 2017

PRESIDENT	Randall Koonce	348-4801	PROGRAM CO-CHAIRS	Dan O'Neil/Barbara Loruse	
1st VP/MEMBERSHIP	Dan O'Neil	341-1938	ALZHEIMERS CHAIR	Tony Boutte	
2nd VP/LEGISLATION	Richard Prawdzienski	844-7577	SUNSHINE CHAIR	Joan Hardin	330-8644
SECRETARY	Karen Hackett	359-2930	TELEPHONE CHAIR	Barbara Loruse	359-1914
TREASURER	Gloria Parker	822-6622	WELCOMING CHAIR	Garry Hanneman	330-3717
SERVICE OFFICER	Wanda Rudy	340-9042	NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Vacant	
PUBLIC RELATIONS	Vacant				

### Chapter Meetings



#### **REVISED SCHEDULE**

**November : Tuesday 14**

**December: Tuesday 12**

Chapter 947's monthly meeting is normally scheduled for the 4th Tuesday of the month at 11:30 a.m. in the Gaylord University Center, Oklahoma Christian University. Exceptions are November and December which require adjustments. Park on the west side of the building, enter through the south portal and look for the Chapter 947 sign-in table. Buffet Lunch: \$10.00

### **P**resident's Space Randall Koonce, President

The Holiday Season is upon us. We have two good programs scheduled for this season, with State Representative Pugh talking to us on November 14 and a very entertaining professional program on December 12. In addition to the programs, we can expect very tasty meals. I hope to see all of you at both meetings. **Again, that is Tuesday, November 14 and Tuesday, December 12.**

If, by any chance, you do not receive a call by the telephone committee please call Barbara Loruse or me and advise us that you are coming. That way, we will have enough food and place settings for everyone. In addition, guests are welcome, but please advise how many will come.

Many of our Chapter members do not attend the monthly Chapter meetings. If you have not attended a Chapter meeting lately, mark your calendar and plan to attend. I think you will enjoy the good lunch, the good program and the good fellowship we enjoy at the Chapter meetings. If you are not being contacted by a telephone committee person, prior to the meeting, please call me at 405-348-4801 or Barbara Loruse at 405-359-1914,

and advise of your intent to attend the meeting. That will assure you of a seat the table. We look forward to seeing you.

ANYONE who is not receiving a monthly call from a telephone committee person and would like to receive a call, can call Barbara Loruse or me (see telephone numbers above) and we'll be certain to get you on the call list, so you can receive a reminder, a couple or three days before each meeting.

Our Chapter election time is quickly approaching. If anyone has a desire to serve in any Chapter officer position or non-elected position, please inform us of your interest.

I hope to see all of you soon and in the interim, I wish each of you Happy Holidays.

**IF YOU NOTICED IN THE MASTHEAD, THE POSITION OF NEWSLETTER EDITOR IS STILL VACANT. PLEASE CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING TO FILL THIS CRITICAL POSITION. IT ONLY TAKES FOUR TO FIVE HOURS EVERY TWO MONTHS, BUT IT PROVIDES AN IMPORTANT SERVICE TO CHAPTER 947 MEMBERS**

## **G**uest Speaker Program

Dan O'Neill, First Vice President

### Chapter 947 Meeting November 14



*Senator Adam Pugh*

Oklahoma State Senator Adam Pugh will be our guest speaker at our **Tuesday, November 14 meeting**. He was elected a year ago last November after a hotly contested republican primary. He represents Senate District 41, which is in NW OKC, and West Edmond, where most of our members live.

Senator Pugh is probably the youngest member of the Oklahoma State Senate. He was appointed to four Senate Committees and is still the new guy, having completed his first legislative session. Prior to the election, Adam was a Captain in the Air Force and was a pilot or weapons control officer for AWACS E-3 Aircraft.

He received a BS Degree from the University of Pittsburgh in 2000 and a MS Degree from Troy University in 2010. He and his sister were raised by a single mom, who made many sacrifices for them. Adam and his wife Sara live in the Valcencia Neighborhood in NW OKC.

Our own Richard Prawdzienski, who represented the Libertarian Party in last year's November election, had several opportunities during the campaign to debate with then Candidate Pugh. Richard arranged for Senator Pugh to speak to our group and will introduce him at the meeting. The State Legislature is in special session and let us hope that our State budgetary issues are settled by the date of our program.

### Chapter 947 Christmas Party December 12



*Kara Chapman - Forever After Co-Owner, Creative Director, and Marketing Manager*

Kara Chapman will entertain us at the **Luncheon December 12** with a Christmas program that will fill the room with holiday songs.

For the past 2 months, Kara has been on tour with the "Always Patsy Cline" show in Southeastern States, which is scheduled to be in Guthrie this spring.

Kara co-owns a company of incredibly talented artists who provide programs for all sorts of corporate events and children programs. Her company "**Forever After Parties**" has a variety of Character performers, who go through a rigorous audition process to ensure that each Character conforms to the highest possible standards. Character performers include Disney Characters, Dorothy, Batgirl, Wonder Woman, Barbie, Snow White, Alice in Wonderland, Captain America, Batman, Prince Charming, Peter Pan just to name a few.

Come join us for a great lunch and together share the holiday spirit with song and thanksgiving for our good fortune and blessings.

## **B**its And Pieces

Dan O'Neil, First Vice President

### **COLA Announcement Reinforces Need for a New COLA Formula**

The cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to federal civilian retirement annuities and Social Security benefits will be 2.0 percent in 2018, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) for consumer price data.

Richard Thissen, NARFE president issued the following statement in response: "Following two years of no and low cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), today's announcement was eagerly awaited by millions of Americans who rely on the increase to keep up with the rising prices for food, housing, gas and medical care. Unfortunately, the 2.0 percent COLA provides only partial relief and serves as a reminder that our method for calculating the increasing cost of goods and services is out of sync with the reality faced by federal annuitants, Social Security recipients and military retirees. ***Our nation's seniors spend more than twice as much on medical care than the population measured by the current formula to calculate COLAs, the CPI-W. Congress must act to implement a new formula that adequately measures costs incurred by seniors.***"

*Dan O'Neil Personal Comments:* The Federal Government and State Governments are probably the last sector to provide COLAs – a Diet COLA is better than no COLAs. My personal "out of pocket" medical expenses are nil except for prescription co-pays. I have had three major medical incidents, which cost virtually nothing, and I am very grateful for our medical coverage.

### **FEHB Program Premium Increase Highlights**

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) today

*Continued*

announced the average Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program premium for America's retired and active federal workers will increase 4.0 percent in 2018, with the average enrollee's share rising 6.1 percent.

FEHBP premiums increased 3.8 percent in 2012, 3.4 percent in 2013, 3.7 percent in 2014, 3.2 percent in 2015, 6.4 percent in 2016 and 4.4 percent in 2017.

Richard Thissen, NARFE president issued the following statement in response: "Over the last several years, federal workers have endured a three-year pay freeze and insufficient pay raises that have widened the gap between public- and private-sector pay. During this time, FEHB premiums have steadily increased, as we are witnessing with the 6.1 percent average increase for enrollees in 2018. Decreasing the purchasing power of America's 5 million strong federal family not only impacts their quality of life, but also has an economic impact on their communities across the country."

*Dan O'Neil Personal Comments:* At our last NARFE meeting – it appears we are getting a few more perks with our Federal Health benefits. The O'Neil's took full advantage of the recent hearing aid benefit for up to \$2,500. The November NARFE Magazine is late because they are lacking some details on the various FEHBP options.

### **NARFE Statement on 1.9 Percent Pay Raise Announcement**

In response to the Administration's proposed federal pay increase for 2018, NARFE President Richard G. Thissen said the following: "NARFE welcomes the Administration's proposed federal pay raise, which prevents the pay for our nation's public servants from falling farther behind private-sector wage growth.

"The 1.9 percent average pay raise includes a 1.4 percent across-the-board increase, and an average additional increase of 0.5 percent in locality-based pay adjustments. Long-standing statutory policy calls for federal pay to increase at the rate of the Employment Cost Index for private-sector wages and salaries (which most recently increased by 2.4 percent), minus 0.5 percent. Additional locality pay increases are intended to close the gap between public- and private-sector pay. Unfortunately, instead of granting a 1.9 percent increase across-the-board, with additional locality pay increases, the Administration combined the two to limit the pay raise to an average of 1.9 percent.

"While federal employees will appreciate the raise, an average increase of 1.9 percent is the minimum required to prevent federal pay from declining further, and more rapidly, below market than the current 35 percent wage disparity between public- and private-sector wages. Both Congress and the President should work together to pur-

sue a more robust pay increase to maintain the highly qualified workforce needed to run an efficient federal government."

*Dan O'Neil Personal Comments:* I find it hard to believe that Federal Employees across the board are paid 35% less than comparable Private Section employees, considering benefits and current retirement. I have been told that many current employees benefited from a Performance Incentive program that was cancelled several years ago and have their pay frozen until their official grade salary catches up with their current higher salary.

### **Chapter Officers Participate in Membership Recruitment at Heath Fairs**

Our Chapter's membership is currently 110 plus and 5-6 potential members have recently attended our meetings. Chapter President Randy Koonce has always supported NARFE Membership and has encouraged members especially Board Members to support NARFE by attending various Health Fairs sponsored by Federal Agencies in the OKC area.

Randy, Karen Hackett and I will be out visiting at GSA Health fairs and another next week. As a Recruiter, we will receive \$10 for any new members recruited through December 31. Randy is working to pay for Sue's Christmas surprise.

Membership recruiting is not just the Chapter President or Chapter Officer's job – we need help from all members. Sharing a NARFE magazine with a former co-worker or neighbor who is an active or retired Federal employee is a little thing we can do to entice individuals to participate as a NARFE Member.

Things –good and bad--are happening in Washington and we need to support the NARFE Leadership and make the Federal Employees case based on facts and logic. When they talk about "Draining the Swamp" - they can be carried away and do more than remove the embedded political executives from a prior administrations but also good and loyal Federal Employees.

### **The Monster In The Closet Is Real**

by Mike Causey (Extract from Federal News Radio.Com)

Question: What is it that so many federal workers have in common with some pre-school-age kids?

Answer: Some in both groups go to bed each night fearing the monster that lurks under the bed or in the closet.

The good news is that most kids get over it. A night light, maybe a careful nightly monster check by mom or dad, and the fear eventually goes away.



**NARFE**  
National Active and Retired Federal Employees  
Edmond Chapter 947

## INFORMER

George W. Lauffer  
14509 Brasswood Blvd  
Edmond, OK 73013

The bad news for many feds is that the fear never goes away. Because there really is a bipartisan monster lurking in the closet. It's not a figment of your imagination. Not your delayed childhood. It's real. While it's been several years since he's attacked (remember the pay freezes, furloughs and shutdowns), he's always out there, ready to take a bite out of your pay or benefits package.

The monster most recently appeared in the House budget resolution, which went after the federal retirement package. While many members of Congress cash in on it: good retirement, highly-subsidized health insurance, a 401(k) plan to die for, etc., many politicians also find it the place to target when looking for long-range (often politically rewarding while being fiscally unreal) savings. So they can get reelected and return to the D.C. swamp they say they hate.

For most of this year, feds who pay attention were standing at attention lots of the time. There were a series of proposals to cut back their retirement plan, make it more expensive, while at the same time less valuable for employees, and to eliminate a temporary gap payment that is vital to many occupations — from firefighters and air traffic controllers to law enforcement officers — who are forced to retire as much as five years before they can collect Social Security. The combined savings in the plan approved by the House was estimated at \$32 billion over a 10-year period. Reverse that and it means feds, postal workers and retirees would get \$32 billion less in take-home pay by losing inflation protection over the next 10 years.

Many civil service old-timers, who've been to this rodeo before, said it would never happen. And sure enough, the Senate came up with a budget resolution that doesn't

make any cuts in civil service retirement benefits. The House adopted the Senate plan and that is that. For this year.

Maybe. Maybe not.

Earlier this week, Sen. Ben Cardin (D-Md.), in a town hall meeting with feds, said they should be outraged over attempts to trim their benefits. He warned that the pending GOP tax plan may have offsetting cuts that would impact government workers and retirees. Cardin represents a state with lots of federal workers, including the headquarters of the Social Security Administration, the National Security Agency, the National Institutes of Health, as well as giant operations at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and Department of Agriculture. He warned that the Thrift Savings Plan accounts could be in trouble under the GOP tax plan. True enough.

One other thing might help keep the fed-bashing monster at bay. That would be if House and Senate Democrats showed the same outrage and push back in protecting career feds when a Democratic president proposed cuts, including pay freezes. During the Clinton and Bush years, a bipartisan coalition — led by Reps. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) and Elijah Cummings (D-Md.), with former Reps. Tom Davis (R-Va.) and Frank Wolf (R-Va.) — beat back numerous proposals to cut federal benefits and trim or eliminate pay raises, whether they came from Clinton or Bush. And they were successful. For whatever reason, that fell apart in 2011, 2012 and 2013, when pay freezes, proposed and supported by the White House, were imposed, even as health premiums jumped each year.

Feds can probably relax this year. Probably.

But the benefits-eating monster is real. And still out there. Just as you suspected.