



FEDERAL BENEFITS EXPERTS

Chapter 190 NEWSLETTER

Ventura County Chapter
<http://www.narfe190.org>

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>> **NATIONAL ACTIVE and RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION** <<

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NOMINATING COMMITTEE

THE BOARD

FOOD SHARE DONATIONS NEEDED

Many locals (often said to be ‘collateral damage’ of many things) continue to rely on donated foods.

You can help them and others *locally* by writing a check to **Food Share** and sending it to: Food Share, 4156 Southbank Rd, Oxnard, CA 93036.

NARFE CHAPTER 190 NEWSLETTER

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JULY LUNCHEON

Place: Elks Club,

801 South A Street, Oxnard

>> Use “A” Street entrance **ONLY** <<

Date: THIRD Thursday, July 20

Time: 11:30 to socialize, 12:00 to dine

Cost: \$15.00

Please make your reservations by **NOON**, Monday, July 17. E-mail **Carl** at 1mrbig1@verizon.net or call 805-487-1801 to make (or *cancel*) a reservation.

On Thursday, **July 20**, we’ll meet at 11:30, with our lunch to be served at noon. The day’s menu will be:

Sweet & Sour Pork Chops

Rice Pilaf Baby Carrots

Green Salad Rolls & Butter

Ice Cream Coffee & Water

Please help our cashier by paying for your lunch with smaller bills (\$1, \$5 and \$10) Thanks!

JULY IS OUR SOCIAL GATHERING

Over the years, our July luncheons have been planned gatherings without presentations. Whether an outdoor picnic, indoor ‘picnic’ or other event, it always provided a chance to simply get together and enjoy the food and conversation with friends. That’s what it’ll be this year, too: a strictly social gathering.

Still, we’re always open for program suggestions. If there’s a topic (or one you’d like to present), please let Program Chair **George Ramirez** know. If you can give him a point of contact, all the better! We want to have presentations of interest to most of our members, including you.

Please call Carl (805-487-1801) to make your reservation(s). If you’ll have a guest, make a reservation - even if your guest won’t be eating with us (it’ll ensure everyone will have a seat). Both you and your guest should be vaccinated, regardless of whether you’re wearing face masks (and it’s OK if you do).

NEED A RIDE – SHARE A RIDE

Need or can you *provide* a ride to our luncheon? Call **Juanita**, Chapter 190’s rideshare facilitator, at 805-488-5281 or email her at redbird1997@aol.com.

NOTES FROM THE TOP

Tony Pizza, President

At the June meeting we had an excellent chicken fried steak. In July we'll have the tasty Sweet & Sour Pork Chops. I encourage (maybe plead with) you to come to a meeting. Perhaps we don't have interesting programs as we did before the pandemic, but we do have nice meals and great camaraderie. Not only that, remember: just getting out of the house and relating with people is good for your health.

Inflation continues to erode our buying power, like I warned when we got our big COLA. Prices for lots of things didn't go up 10%; I find some things went up more like 50 to 75%! Still, we're better off than many who don't have the security our OPM annuities provide. Current estimates are that inflation has cooled down, and next year there will likely be a much smaller COLA, more like 3% – or less. As usual, though, we won't know until October.

WEP Update: Ways and Means Committee Ranking Member Richard E. Neal (D-MA) reintroduced his legislation, the Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act of 2023, to fix the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). Under the bill, current WEP retirees will receive \$150 a month in relief payments. I'll believe it when I see it.

Remember last year when the Thrift Savings Plan “updated” their computer systems? But in the weeks and months following the launch of the update, severe technical problems led to longer times for processing loans, withdrawals, death benefits and more. Not being able to access funds caused financial hardship for many.

Seven TSP participants filed a class action lawsuit, alleging that TSP managers and their contractors failed to provide participants with the services required by contract, industry standards and federal law. Their legal action, coming exactly one year after the 2022 update, follows a long series of participants' complaints, concerns and frustrations with the new system. Though the exact size of the class is unknown, the plaintiffs said they “believe that the class consists of hundreds, if not thousands, of persons and entities that were harmed by defendants' conduct.”

The teacher called Little Tony to her desk. She said, “This essay you've written about your pet dog is exactly the same essay your brother has written.”

“Of course,” he said. “It's the same dog.” - *Tony*

ANOTHER BOOSTER BEING DEVELOPED

Surely you've heard ‘they’ are developing a new anti-COVID booster. It is to provide protection beyond that of the vaccines and boosters, plus more recent variants.

To be released this fall, it begins to sound like the ‘program’ of annual flu vaccine updates.

SERVICE OFFICER NOTES

by Carol Moore

Recent columns have dealt with planning for your estate, noting a well-designed estate plan will avoid the probate process. I'll conclude with a summary of what has been covered and continue to urge everyone to create or update their personal estate plan. (Of course, I do recommend using an attorney to create your plan.)

The probate process is a way of changing title on assets for those who did not plan. The process will take time and it is *not* free, typically costing 5 to 10% of the estate's value. In California, it can take months or years to complete the probate process. However, a well-prepared Estate Plan can avoid probate. Creating such a plan is not free, but should be much less than the cost and delays associated with the probate process. To review:

An Estate Plan usually has several documents: a Will; a Living Trust; a Power of Attorney; and Healthcare Directive. Each is separate and distinct, but they comprise an estate plan. Such a plan can protect you and your loved ones at all life stages: when you're alive and well, when you're incapacitated, and/or when you pass away.

A Will allows you to designate what will happen to personal property items (i.e. jewelry, collectibles, furniture) after you pass away. More importantly, it lets you nominate a guardian for your minor children after you've passed away.

The cost to create (or update) a Living Trust is small compared to the cost of putting your loved ones through probate delays and also has other features. (To discuss specific details of how a Living Trust works and how it can benefit you, schedule a free consultation with a lawyer says up front that first one is free.) A living trust lets you decide who is to be in charge of distributing your assets after you pass away. It also lets you to specify the amount(s) you'll leave to your loved ones as well as at what age(s) your selected recipient(s) are to be inherited/distributed/received.

The Power of Attorney is designed to allow others to act on your behalf should you become incapacitated. With it, you shelly foote can choose and authorize a trusted agent to pay your bills, file your taxes, deal with various accounts, manage investments, etc. when you can no longer manage your financial affairs.

Finally, a Healthcare Directive lets you name one or more individuals to make medical and end-of-life decisions when you're unable to make them for yourself. The Healthcare Directive is also accompanied by a legal document that authorizes release of your medical information and health history to your loved ones, such as your spouse or children. Without these documents, your loved one(s) cannot legally make medical decisions for you or access your medical records.

Unless we speak, Congress will assume our consent!

LEGISLATION CORNER

by George Ramirez

The Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E) measures goods and services frequently purchased by seniors. The Fair COLA for Seniors Act of 2023, H.R. 716, would use it to more accurately reflect seniors' annual costs for them, ensuring the consumer price index to more accurately determine seniors' COLAs.

Under the currently used formula to calculate COLAs, based on the Consumer Price Index for Wages (CPI-W), seniors lose purchasing power due to underestimated inflation. Seniors spend more on medical care and goods specific to their needs compared to the average spending of the public. The CPI-E tracks only the spending habits of Americans aged 62 and over, using it will better determine appropriate COLAs. Calculations using the CPI-W and those using the proposed CPI-E show a 0.27% advantage for senior with the latter, which highlights the need for Congress to take up this key legislation.

Debt Limit and Budget Deal Avoided Shutdown

The debt limit deal to avoid a shutdown included an agreement avoiding another debt limit crisis until 2025. Read on for information about one budget proposal.

Budget Proposal Would Cut Our Earned Benefits

The Republican Study Committee (RSC) of over 150 House members, released its FY24 budget proposal to cut costs and reduce the federal budget by an estimated \$75 billion over 10 years. As written, it would reduce federal workers' and retirees' earned pay and benefits, but also change Social Security.

It would eliminate the annuity portion of FERS by limiting federal retirement compensation to only contribute to the TSP. It would also require *all* active workers to pay more into FERS without any additional benefit. Also, annuity calculations would be based on the highest 5 years, rather than the current 3.

It would make changes to the FEHB program, reducing the government's contributions to it, and (of course) make employees cover the difference above their healthcare plan's current premiums. It would also end FEHB retirement benefits for all new federal hires, so they couldn't be in a FEHB plan after retirement.

We *must* let Congress know what we want because

Unless we speak, Congress will assume we agree!

DEALING WITH SCAMS

Scammers may use email, text message, social media, or U.S. mail. Also, they may claim to be from an agency or organization you know, hoping to gain your trust. They might say there's a problem or a prize. They'll pressure you to act *immediately*, and tell you to pay in a specific way.

While every spam attempt may seem totally different, each one has one of two primary goals: to get either your money or your personal information.

The action you take (or better yet, DON'T take) can help you successfully avoid a bad outcome.

Various agencies, including Social Security, FTC and IRS often issue scam warnings or advisories as the numbers of attempts increase. Here's a summary of what to do or not do when you receive a spam query:

Tips to avoid a scam

1. Hang up the call or ignore the message. Instead, check with or talk to someone you trust.
2. Be skeptical and cautious of unexpected calls and messages offering unpublished "opportunities."
3. Do not click on links or open attachments.
4. Keep your money and personal information safe. NEVER transfer money or buy gift cards. Don't share your Social Security, Medicare or other numbers in response to a scammer's question.

If you are a victim

1. Stop further communications with the scammer.
2. Notify your financial institutions and safeguard your accounts.
3. Contact local law enforcement and file a police report. File a complaint with the FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center ([ic3.gov](https://www.ic3.gov)).
4. Report Social Security-related scams to SSA OIG (oig.ssa.gov). Report other scams to the Federal Trade Commission ([ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov)).
5. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, keep a record of all communications with the scammer as well as financial transaction information and dates, so all interactions will be well documented.

Sometimes, no matter how careful you may be, you may still become a victim. If and when that happens, don't stay silent. File reports. Fight back – if not for yourself, then for future potential victims.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT - see **Note** below

	<u>Members</u>
End of last month	285
New Members	1
Dropped or Transferred	<u>- 3</u>
GRAND TOTAL	283

TREASURER'S REPORT

End of the last month balance	\$ 1,616.48
Receipts	560.44
Disbursements	<u>(428.30)</u>
End of month balance	\$ 1,748.62

ALZHEIMER'S NEWS

As this issue of the newsletter was being prepared, news broke regarding the successful testing and the full FDA approval of Leqembi (lecanemab), which you must have heard by now.

It's a success story, one we've followed along the way. Whether NARFE provided direct support for this effort, NARFE and its members have supported research efforts with millions of dollars over the years. If you've put a dollar in the collection basket at our luncheons, know that you've also contributed to the efforts.

This one success against early stage Alzheimer's can't be the end of our participation. There is still a LOT more to be done to defeat Alzheimer's, yet this one success shows we're on the way to conquering the disease!

Alzheimer's column continues below...



**National Active and Retired
Federal Employees Association
235 East Olive Street
Oxnard CA 93033-4533**

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Alzheimer's column continues

Current Alzheimer's treatments *temporarily* improve symptoms of memory loss and thinking and reasoning problems. Those treatments don't stop the underlying decline and death of brain cells, so Alzheimer's continues to develop. Other research to continues along many paths. Some of them include:

- Fighting amyloid plaques with monoclonal antibodies
- How to prevent Tau protein from tangling
- Reduce brain cell inflammation
- Study heart, circulatory system and blood itself to understand how their health affects Alzheimer's
- Study how and why hormone therapy during early menopause seems to protect thinking and memory
- Share data between researchers and develop data standards as means to avoid duplication of work

YOUR NAME IN PRINT?

If you find your name in lower case somewhere in this newsletter (besides in the new member listings), your lunch will be free at this month's meeting. We pick a member's name at random; that name then appears john doe somewhere. (It could be *your* name; last month, it was Lawrence Eck.)

If you find *your* name, tell Carl when you make your reservation or when you check in. Your lunch will be free, so start looking now!

NEW MEMBER

We have one new member this month: **Lynn Lawson**. Please welcome Lynn as well as others you may not have seen for a while (including anyone who hasn't often attended our luncheons, perhaps since before COVID struck).

NEED TO UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS?

If you need to update information you provided to NARFE long ago, please contact **Carl Bailey**. He maintains Chapter 190's member information (as well as the addresses used to mail this newsletter).

Carl's email and phone number are in the box on this newsletter's front page.

LOOKING AHEAD TO NEXT MONTH

We'll be at the Elks, Thursday, August 17. Phone or email **Carl** to make reservations by noon Monday, August 14. The entrée will be Chicken Fried Steak.

JULY LUNCHEON-FINAL REMINDER

We'll meet at the Elks on Thursday, July 20. Please be sure phone or email your reservations to **Carl** by noon Monday, July 17.