



# October 2023 Newsletter The Key Notes



National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association  
Chapter No. 409 • Frederick, Maryland • <https://narfechapter409.org/>  
<< Next luncheon / meeting is on Tuesday, October 10 at 11:00 AM >>

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## September luncheon program



The two speakers at the September luncheon, **Tom Coogan** (left) and **Phoenix Blount** (right), who represented the [Frederick County Board of Elections](#), provided some very interesting information about how secure the Maryland elections are. They also had handouts with the dates of the 2024 Primary & General Elections, as well as information about volunteering to be an election worker. You can find relevant information and links in the first bullet on the "Handouts & Downloads" section of the NARFE Chapter 409 website, <https://narfechapter409.org/handouts/>.

## President's Message (Elinor Abrell • 301-831-8753)

Along with the official arrival of Autumn, on that day we were visited with the fringe wind and rain of tropical storm Ophelia as it moved up the East coast. Rain is needed and welcome, wind not so much. We will need to wait a bit longer to see the beautiful colors that come with this season.

COVID, in the form of one variant or another, is still very much with us. I can vouch for that, as I was a very recent victim, though fully vaccinated and boosted and in general good health. Perhaps I was just too complacent, as I have no idea how, when, or where I was exposed. Fortunately, my illness was short lived (5 days) with mostly the flu-like symptoms that seem to be the norm now. However, even though I then felt fine, another 5 days passed before I tested negative. I am truly grateful for the vaccines that we now have. A bit of information on COVID test kits: the federal government has just announced that, **starting on September 25**, once again **free test kits** will be available through the website <https://www.COVIDtests.gov>, with a limit of **one order of 4 kits per household** delivered directly to your home. With the coming fall and winter seasons, upticks in all forms of viral illnesses are seen. Protect yourself by getting vaccines as needed, and even wearing a mask if in a crowded or questionable site. The newer COVID variants are highly contagious, so having some test kits at home is advised.

A *Washington Watch* article (September NARFE magazine, page 10) points out that a new Congressional budget proposal for FY2024 coming from a Committee in the House of Representatives takes aim at federal pay and benefits . . . no surprise here. This proposal contains significant cuts to earned pay and benefits for both active employees and retirees, along with changes to Social Security. NARFE, of course, strongly opposes this budget proposal. More than ever, membership in and support of NARFE is really essential to all federals.

November is once again the all-important meeting to hear the latest information on Federal Employee Health Benefits, which impacts premium costs for all carriers. Open Season is just ahead.

## Financial Report (Kathy O'Connor • 301-845-7964)

<b>Balance available to Chapter 409 as of Aug 19, 2023</b> . . . . .	<b>\$5,858.02</b>
• Income . . . . .	\$366.00
• Expenses . . . . .	\$457.91
<b>Balance available to Chapter 409 as of Sep 20, 2023</b> . . . . .	<b>\$5,766.11</b>

## Legislative Report (David Carmack • 240-578-4965)

On August 31, President Biden issued his alternative pay plan for federal civil employees, setting in motion an average 5.2 percent pay increase beginning January 2024. The proposed pay increase is comprised of a 4.7 percent across-the-board raise plus a 0.5 percent average locality pay adjustment. The pay increase will go into effect unless Congress enacts a different amount.

The federal government will shut down on October 1, 2023, absent Congressional funding for the government for its fiscal year beginning on that date.

## Chaplain's Report (Margaret Clark • 240-405-4018)

We keep in touch with the shut-ins who are: **Betty Brewer & Mary Miller**.

In case of illness or death, please notify me at the phone number above, or by email ([mclark615@verizon.net](mailto:mclark615@verizon.net)). Thank you!

## Alzheimer's Report (Kathy Siggins • 301-829-2462)

Our speaker for October is **Megeen White**, Program Manager and Research Champion for the **Greater MD Alzheimer's Association in Frederick**. I hope you can attend to hear more about the new Alzheimer's drugs and the decisions made by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services concerning Aduhelm, Leqembi, and other drugs in clinical trials that are removing beta-amyloid from the brains of people in the early



stages of Alzheimer's. You don't want to miss it! Also, NARFE's National Walk to End Alzheimer's Team, of which Team HOPE is a member, has raised \$60,907 towards its national goal of \$100,000. Team HOPE has currently raised more than \$4,400 towards our goal of \$7,000 by Walk day, **Sunday, October 15**. With your help I'm sure we can reach our goal. Please join us or make a donation at my Walk to End Alzheimer's [website](#).

Please continue to buy the Alzheimer's Semipostal stamps, whose proceeds benefit Alzheimer's research. Purchase them at your post office or by clicking [here](#). Thank you!

## Membership Report (Scott Darby • 301-662-7123)

We currently have 308 members. I forgot to introduce a new member, **Dick Jenkins**, at the September meeting. What makes it worse, I spoke to Dick when he came into the room. I knew I was forgetting something when opening the meeting. Dick, you will be introduced at the October meeting, hopefully with other new members. We are still in the process of updating the Chapter 409 membership list.

## Note from your Newsletter Editor/Webmaster

(Dan Grauman • 301-806-5999)

If you haven't done so already, please visit our website located at <https://narfechapter409.org>. There you will find information about our Chapter, upcoming events, current and past newsletters, copies of handouts, and more.

Frederick Chapter 409, Inc. of NARFE  
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October 2023

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NARFE Chapter No. 409 • Frederick, Maryland

NARFE Chapter 409 luncheons take place at the **Golden Corral Buffet & Grill, 5621 Spectrum Drive • Frederick, MD 21703 • Phone: 301-662-5922. See 2023 luncheon schedule below • buffet starts at 11:00 AM, program starts at 12:30 PM.**

**If you are not feeling well on the day of the luncheon, please do not attend.**

**SNOW POLICY:** If Frederick County Schools are closed for weather, the luncheon meeting is canceled. If County Schools are delayed but open at meeting time, the luncheon meeting will be held as scheduled.

Date	Speaker	Program
Oct 10	Megeen White - <a href="#">Alzheimer's Association, Greater MD Chapter</a>	Alzheimer's
Nov 14	David Hurka – <a href="#">BlueCross/Blue Shield FEP</a>	Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program
Dec 12	Brad Stone – <a href="#">National Museum of Civil War Medicine</a>	Santa & Christmas at the time of the Civil War

**2024**

Jan 9	Mary Rolle & Chris Manners – <a href="#">Frederick County Register of Wills</a>	The Frederick County Register of Wills
Feb 13	<a href="#">Brad Young, CFP</a>	Tax strategies for seniors
Mar 12	Moss Rudley, Supt. <a href="#">Historic Preservation Training CTR.</a>	National Park Service
Apr 9	To be determined	<a href="#">Maryland General Assembly</a> update
May 14	Representative of charity donation recipient	New officers' installation, charity donation, memorial service
Jun 11	<b>BINGO</b>	<b>BINGO</b>

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