



May 2024 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, May 14 at 11:00 AM >>

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

We were fortunate to have Maryland State Senator **Karen Lewis Young** (D-Dist. 3) as speaker at our April luncheon, coming barely 24 hours after closure of the 2024 session of the Maryland General Assembly. Senator Lewis Young gave an overview of some major bills that were passed during the session, also mentioning a few that failed to pass. She answered several questions, many dealing with topics of local interest.



Senator Lewis Young (left) with Chapter 409 President, Elinor Abrell

Our May 14 luncheon date happens to fall on the day of the Maryland Primary Election. Voting can be in person at a polling place or by early options of mail-in or ballot drop box.

So often voter turnout for this election is low, perhaps because of voter apathy and lack of interest. Yes, a primary election really is important as it determines what candidates make the ballot for the General Election in November. There are divisive issues that have separated much of the country into two contentious tribes. Many Americans feel that this Congress is in constant chaos and turmoil and accomplishing little. The two most contentious items currently are women's reproductive rights and gun control. Where do you stand on these? Choose your candidates carefully and know where they stand on issues. So often is heard the statement that "I don't like any candidate, so I won't vote at all." You do have another choice that is important: *vote the issue* that matters to you, because that is the best way to make the change you want. Change comes through the ballot box; the choice is yours!

The League of Women Voters (LWV) is a known reliable source of information pertaining to voting. They have a special website, www.vote411.org, that offers personalized voting information. Enter a bit of information and, under "Know Your Ballot", you'll be shown the ballot appropriate to your district and party. All candidates for all positions on the ballot are listed. Each candidate has an opportunity to answer a set of questions. Some races may have as many as 15 candidates, so reading their responses is helpful. The best candidate may not have the funds to support a huge costly campaign effort, and thus gets lost in all the rhetoric and noise, which is why it is important to look at all

the information possible, as well as its source. LWV has long provided accurate and unbiased voting information.

May is also the month that Chapter 409 makes its annual donation to a local charity. The selected charity for this year is [Daybreak Adult Day Services](#). This local organization offers transportation, meals, activities, medical oversight, and socialization for seniors and challenged individuals, which at the same time gives a welcome respite to their caregivers. We thank our members who support the 50-50 raffle that is a source of funding for this donation.

Also in May, we take a few moments to shine a light of remembrance on those Chapter members whom we have lost during the past year: **Betty Brewer, Ruth Brickhouse, Helga Ziegler Daniels, Stanley (Stan) Demich, Effie Louise Fulmer, Dorothy (Dottie) Kline, Kathleen (Kathy) Kusel Patrick, Clarence Lee Taylor, and Leona Zerby.**

And, last but not least, May is the month that ends the Chapter 409 year. At this meeting the new Executive Committee will take the oath of office and begin official duties on June 1 (see names and positions in the Nominating Committee Report). Leaving the Executive Committee is Member-at-Large **Walter Rabbitt**, and we acknowledge and thank him for his many, many years of service to the Chapter. **Joe Fitzgerald** is not returning as Recording Secretary, and we thank him for his outstanding service in that office, as well as heading the Bylaws update project. We welcome new Members-at-Large **Susan Janssen** and **Ronnie Osterman**.

As I step down from the office of President, I want to thank all members of the Executive Committee who graciously gave of their time and efforts to advance the interests of the Chapter. This office is now in the very capable hands of **Scott Darby**, who will be writing the President's Message going forward.

Chapter 409 Bylaws Committee Report

(Joe Fitzgerald, Committee Chairman • 240-422-9115)

The Chapter 409 Executive Committee approved a final version of the draft Bylaws that was submitted by the Bylaws Committee. These Chapter 409 Bylaws have been forwarded to NARFE Headquarters by President Elinor Abrell for their review and approval, with any comments or questions to be handled by Joe Fitzgerald, Chairman of the Bylaws Committee. Once approved by NARFE Headquarters, the draft Bylaws will be posted on the Chapter 409 website, so that everyone can have access to them. A final step will be for the Chapter 409 membership to vote to approve them during a membership meeting.

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

Balance available to Chapter 409 as of Mar 20, 2024 \$6,015.09
• Income \$466.00
• Expenses \$143.10
Balance available to Chapter 409 as of Apr 20, 2024 \$6,337.99

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

The Office of Personnel Management has finalized a rule, published in the Federal Register on April 4, 2024, to protect career civil service jobs from being subject to politicization via the “Schedule F” proposal of the prior administration. The Committee on Oversight and Accountability has approved the Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) Protection Act, H.R. 7868, which bill (and its counterpart in the Senate (S. 4035)) seeks to combat fraud in the FEHB program by requiring federal agencies to verify that an employee is eligible to add a family member to their FEHB health coverage plan. On March 25, 2024, the Republican Study Committee unveiled its fiscal 2025 budget plan, which includes substantial reductions to federal workers’ retirement and health care benefits and eliminates the authority for the President to set annual pay raises for federal employees. In his proposed budget for fiscal year 2025, the President has included a 2% pay increase for federal employees. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) and five other senators (four Democrats and one Independent) have introduced a bill, S. 3974, to change the cost-of-living (COLA) calculation that would benefit seniors receiving Social Security.

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

We would like to welcome new Chapter 409 member **Barbra Rosenthal**. We hope you will attend our May meeting. We currently have 298 members. This is the first time we’ve been below 300. Three members were dropped for non-renewal. Letters were sent to remind them to hopefully renew.

This is my last report as 1st Vice President (Membership). Please give the new 1st Vice President (Membership), **Chuck Caloia**, all the help you can provide. Please let him know about any prospective members and report any deaths. We need to keep our membership list as current as possible. Thank you!

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

Marvin George Bures, age 90, died April 11, 2024. There is no surviving spouse.

We keep in touch with the shut-in who is **Mary Miller**. In case of illness or death, please notify me at the phone number above, or by email (mclark615@verizon.net). Thank you!

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

I’d like to share some good news from our partnership with the Alzheimer’s Association: *“By raising more than \$16 million to date for the Alzheimer’s Association, NARFE has funded critical research toward treatment, prevention and, ultimately, a cure for Alzheimer’s and all other dementia, while also providing vital*

funding for our care and support services through their participation in Walk to End Alzheimer’s®,” said Joanne Pike, DrPH, Alzheimer’s Association president and CEO. *“We are inspired by NARFE members’ generosity and grateful for their commitment to raise an additional \$1 million for our mission by the end of 2026.”*

During NARFE’s annual meeting last November, it was proposed that the next donation goal of \$17 million be set for the end of calendar year 2025. However, after discussions with representatives of the Alzheimer’s Association, it was determined that based on our average donations from members, including those raised during the “Longest Day” and “Walk to End Alzheimer’s” events, the goal was more reachable by the calendar year 2026. Thank you all for your generous donations. I won’t quit until we have a “World Without Alzheimer’s.”

Nominating Committee Report

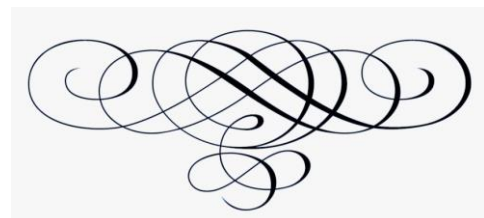
(Chuck Caloia • 301-938-2000)

Please welcome Chapter 409’s Executive Committee members for 2024-25: President – **Scott Darby**; 1st Vice President (Membership) – **Chuck Caloia**; 2nd Vice President (Legislation) – **David Carmack**; Corresponding Secretary – **Vicki Yanez**; Recording Secretary – **Beverly Rynex**; Treasurer – **Kathy O’Connor**; Chaplain – **Margaret Clark**; Service Officer – **Chuck Caloia**; Newsletter Editor & Webmaster – **Dan Grauman**; six Members-at-Large – **J.D. Brooks, Margaret Hawker, Susan Janssen, Pam Ogasawara, Ronnie Osterman, and Jeanine Young**.

The Nominating Committee consisted of the following Chapter members: **Chuck Caloia** (Chair), **Gerry Blessing**, and **Pam Ogasawara**. We wish to thank all those Chapter members who volunteered to serve in a position or otherwise participated in the nominating process this year.

Editor’s Note (Dan Grauman • 301-806-5999)

On behalf of the 2023-24 Executive Committee, I’d like to thank our outgoing President, **Elinor Abrell**, for her dedication and leadership as President of NARFE Chapter 409 for nine years (2015-2024). Elinor has provided many wonderful articles for our monthly newsletter, has kept us informed of important news from NARFE National and NARFE Maryland Federation, and has been a strong advocate for our Chapter with many innovative ideas. We look forward to her continued support in her new role as Immediate Past President.



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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.

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.

Date	Speaker(s)	Program
May 14	Representative of Daybreak Adult Day Services , this year's NARFE Chapter 409 charity donation recipient	New officers' installation, charity donation, memorial service
Jun 11	BINGO BINGO BINGO	BINGO BINGO BINGO

Dues payments and gifts or contributions to NARFE are NOT deductible as charitable contributions for Federal Income Tax purposes.