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## Daily Convention Reports

**Thursday, September 2, 2010**

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## New Officers Elected to National Posts

The delegates to the 31st Biennial NARFE National Convention have spoken, and the Association has four new national officers for the next two years. The election results were announced by Ballot & Teller Committee Chairman Jimmy Coleman of Georgia, and the winners were declared officially by National President Margaret L. Baptiste.

Current National Vice President Joseph A. Beaudoin of Winchester, VA, was elected National President. He defeated past Maryland Federation President Richard L. Strombotne of Gaithersburg, MD, by a vote of 4,472 (74 percent) to 1,580 (26 percent). Beaudoin is the first sitting National Vice President to succeed to the presidency in recent memory. Current National President Baptiste had previously served as National Vice President but had been out of office four years before being elected National President in 2006.

In a three-way race for National Vice President, Region X Vice President Paul H. Carew of Pittsboro, NC, received 3,109 votes (51 percent) to 2,795 votes (46 percent) for Region VII Vice President Martha E. Leiker, Denver, CO, and 163 votes (3 percent) for Kenneth D. Nolan, Belchertown, MA, Massachusetts Federation President.

In the three-way race for National Secretary, past North Carolina Federation President Elaine Hughes, Asheville, NC, garnered 3,163 votes (52 percent) to 1,584 votes (26 percent) for former National Secretary David F. Sullivan, Springfield, VA, and 1,321 votes (22 percent) for H. Ray Harrington, Paradise, CA, past California Federation president.

And, in the three-way race for National Treasurer, Region II Vice President Charles W. Saylor, Towson, MD, won with 3,132 votes (52 percent) to 1,471 votes (24 percent) for Colorado Federation President Frank Impinna, Denver, CO, and 1,460 (24 percent) for Region III Vice President Robert S. Harrell, Athens, AL.

There were also contested races for regional vice president in five of NARFE's 10 regions. The election results in Region I necessitated a run-off this morning. In the voting yesterday, former Massachusetts Federation President Gilbert W. Blaisdell and New Hampshire Federation Legislative Chair Stephen J. Shurtleff, Penacook, NH, received 216 (44 percent) and 189 (38 percent) votes respectively. But since neither received the necessary 50 percent plus one, the runoff was ordered. The other two candidates in the race for Region I vice president were Kenneth D. Nolan, 45 votes (9 percent) and Ralph F. Browne, Boston, former Massachusetts Federation

president 42 votes (9 percent).

For Region II Vice President, Ronald P. Bowers, Timonium, MD, former Maryland Federation president, defeated Walter T. Berwick, Selbyville, DE, former Delaware Federation president, 630 votes (65 percent) to 341 votes (35 percent)

In Region III, past Florida Federation President Donald Stewart, Coral Gables, FL, won a three-way race with 495 votes (64 percent). He defeated former Alabama Federation President Shelton Hawsey, Birmingham, AL, 149 votes (19 percent) and former Florida Federation President Benjamin Pappa, Punta Gorda, FL, 130 votes (17 percent).

Region IV Vice President Paul E. Johnson, Bedford, IN, easily defeated a challenge from past Ohio Federation President Dennis Petrack, Louisville, OH, 437 votes (72 percent) to 173 votes (28 percent).

And in Region X, past Virginia Federation President William F. Martin, Bumpus, VA, defeated former National Vice President Bill Austin, Charlotte, NC, 507 votes (66 percent) to 262 votes (34 percent).

Elections in the other five regions were uncontested: Region V, incumbent Richard G. Thissen, Lake Ozark, MO; Region VI, Jerome S. Smith, Tyler, TX, past Texas Federation president (elected to replace Jerry Hatfield, who did not seek re-election); Region VII, Betty Lucero-Turner, Denver, CO (elected to replace Martha E. Leiker, who ran for National Vice President); Region VIII, incumbent Helen L. Zajac, Vallejo, CA; and Region IX, incumbent Lanny G. Ross, Bremerton, WA.

## **Delegates Approve Dues Increase**

Delegates to the NARFE National Convention solidly backed a resolution to increase dues in balloting on Wednesday. At issue was an amended resolution that raised dues higher than the level recommended by the Bylaws Committee in its Monday report.

The committee-backed resolution called for an increase in annual dues to \$34. However, as amended from the floor and approved by delegates at the polls, the new dues structure is \$40 for one year, \$72 for two years and \$102 for three years. Dues withholding dues will be set at \$34 annually. The amounts are for national dues only; it is still up to chapters to set their own dues.

The vote on the dues increase was 4,409 affirmative votes to 1,672 negative votes, a percentage of 72.5 yes votes, easily exceeding the needed two-thirds (4,049 votes) required to amend the Bylaws. National President Margaret L. Baptiste announced that the rates will go into effect immediately, but said it will take Headquarters a few months to make necessary changes in paperwork.

## **Bylaws Review Approved**

Delegates voted for the creation of a 10-member committee to prepare a revised set of Bylaws for the Association. The committee's recommended changes will be presented to the 2012 National Convention for action. It was the only resolution recommended for adoption by the Resolutions Committee, chaired by Charles Stanphill of Oklahoma.

As originally proposed, Resolution 10-42 would have established a five-person review committee, appointed by the National President. The committee amended it to expand the panel to include a member from each of NARFE's 10 regions and to give authority for appointing the group to the National Executive Board. The amendment was adopted.

The only other resolution discussed, 10-41, called for a task force to study whether NARFE should set up a charitable arm under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the tax code. The committee had recommended it be rejected, but it was withheld for debate. It was rejected by the delegates. Three other resolutions were rejected as recommended.

## **Membership Resolutions Handled Speedily**

Delegates handily dealt with resolutions dealing with membership. Maria Ritzman of Pennsylvania, Membership Committee chair, made the report. The committee recommended one resolution, 10-34 (reverting back to the 2003 version of the F-7 Chapter Officer Report), for adoption. The delegates did not agree, and after spirited discussion on the merits of returning to the use of an old form, voted not to adopt the resolution.

Two others were recommended for adoption as amended: 10-36 (recruitment incentive raised to \$10, which the committee amended to \$4), and 10-40 (to remove language limiting Matching Funds Program requests to a minimum of \$100, amended by the committee to read "any request under \$100 must be discussed with the National Office"). The incentive increase was voted down, leaving it at the current \$8 rate. Also, the committee's amendment was defeated, and the original resolution, which set no limit on amounts for Matching Funds, was adopted.

The delegates also adopted Resolution 10-37 (resumption of guidance pamphlet in reporting deaths), which the committee had recommended for rejection. Delegates decided they wanted to have Headquarters make the pamphlets available, either paper or electronically. All other resolutions were rejected as recommended.

## **Marvelous Museum**

National President Margaret L. Baptiste called the Michigan Night at the Van Andel Museum Center "outstanding," and delegates signaled their appreciation by giving the Host Committee a warm round of applause.

## **Adcock: 'You Control Your Destiny'**

In the past two years, NARFE has racked up a long string of legislative victories, Legislative Director Dan Adcock told delegates. If the achievements were described in a story in this year's convention bulletin, the headline might read, "NARFE Puts Money in Your Pocket and Protects Your Benefits," he said.

But, he warned, when the delegates meet next in Reno, NV, in 2012, the headline could be: "Federal Salary, Retirement and Health Benefits Slashed by \$50 Billion."

That, he said, “could be our reality if we do not take control of our destiny.”

Achievements. Adcock reported on several of NARFE’s legislative achievements:

- Equity for federal retirees in the economic stimulus bill with a \$250 refundable tax credit for the year 2009 for retirees not eligible for Social Security;
- Defeat of an budget amendment to cut federal civilian retirement and/or health benefits by \$10 billion over 10 years;
- Enactment of several civil service improvements, including authorization for federal agencies to re-employ federal retirees without offset to annuity; ability for Federal Employees Retirement System workers to credit unused sick leave toward retirement, as their Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) colleagues can; provision of locality pay for federal employees in Hawaii, Alaska and the territories; and permission for CSRS employees to work part time at the end of their careers without reducing their final annuity.

More recently, Adcock added, NARFE helped push back four attempts to deny federal workers a 1.4 percent salary increase for 2011.

NARFE was able to achieve these successes, he said, because of its grass-roots efforts, donations to NARFE-PAC, the persistence of the NARFE Legislative Department and the involvement of coalitions it leads.

What’s Next. The economic crisis is translating into public anger over federal spending, Adcock pointed out, which will make it “very difficult” to obtain relief from an increase in Medicare premiums. In years when there is no retirement cost-of-living adjustment, Social Security recipients don’t have to pay the increase, but those not eligible for Social Security, including many federal retirees, do.

He also said reform, rather than full repeal, of the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision may be the best that NARFE can hope for, even if Congress embarks upon Social Security reform. He also said efforts to get premium conversion are running counter to trends that call for imposing taxes on health spending.

In addition, NARFE must be ready for recommendations from the so-called Debt Commission or Congress for very large cuts in federal spending.

He gave the delegates a “to-do” list.

- Energize and educate the rank-and-file when you get back home;
- Get to know and educate new and returning lawmakers; and
- Recruit and retain members, telling them that where individual efforts fail, organized efforts succeed.

With members’ help, Adcock concluded, “Massive Benefits Cuts” does not have to be the headline in Reno. Rather, he said, it can be: “NARFE Overcomes Political and Budget Gauntlet; Association Finds Opportunities in Adversity.”

## Legislative Program Adopted for 112th Congress

The National Convention approved a Legislative Program for the 112th Congress, which will convene in January 2011.

The Legislative Committee looked at NARFE's existing initiatives in light of emerging priorities and decided that some needed more emphasis than in the past, said Edward Konys of Ohio, committee chair. One of these areas is federal employee pay parity.

It also considered 11 resolutions, recommending two for adoption and inclusion in the program: 10-25, allowing members of Congress and congressional staff to remain in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP), and 10-29, calling for monitoring and reporting on the activities of the so-called Debt Commission.

The committee also recommended two resolutions for adoption as amended: 10-28, supporting a refund to the United States Postal Service from the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund, provided that the payments would not result in reduction of federal annuities; and 10-29, asking federations for amendments to the Legislative Program between national conventions.

Delegates amended one of the existing planks in the program, voting to add an emphatic "actively pursue" to support for the Office of Personnel Management to apply for a subsidy that could lower FEHBP premiums. Delegates also approved two of seven resolutions that the committee had recommended be rejected. Resolution 10-27 calls for expansion of Alaska/Hawaii locality pay reform to retirees. Resolution 10-46 advocates Washington, DC, statehood.