

THE 740 EXPRESS

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES, CHAPTER 740

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April 5, 2000

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Next Chapter Meetings: Our next meeting will be on **Thursday April 20, 2000** at the Giuseppe's Pizza & Restaurant in Warminster at 1PM. **Please plan to attend and show your support.**

Please note our Tresurer and friend Beryl Fogelsanger's health has forced her to enter a full time nursing home. Beryl and Mel have moved to State College to be closer to their family. We wish them our warmest best wishes. (University Park Nursing Center, Rm. 106, 450 Waupelan Dr. State College Pa. 814-867-5976) Melvin 188 E. Cherry Lane, State College Pa. 16803

PIZZA PARTY Our Treat !!!! **Doylestown NARFE Chapter 740 Meeting**

Be our guest! 1 PM April 20, 2000 Giuseppe's Pizza & Restaurant 215-674-5550
(Directions: About 3 miles West of old NADC/NAWC on Street Road or One mile East of 611)
Look for Giuseppe's in the Shopping Center with "Franks Nursery" near the corner of Davis and Street Road.

NARFE, one of America's oldest and largest associations, was founded in 1921 with the mission of protecting the earned rights and benefits of America's active and retired federal workers. The largest federal employee/ retiree organization, NARFE has a membership of nearly 425,000 men and women and represents the interests of nearly 2.4 million federal retirees, spouses, and survivors.

NARFE Chapter 740 membership has donated \$100.00 to the ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

NARFE SAYS NOW IS THE TIME FOR G-P-O REFORM

"That's one act completed, but there are two more to go," Frank G. Atwater, National President/CEO of the National Association of Retired Federal Employees (NARFE), commented on the unanimous Senate vote to repeal the Social Security retirement earnings test. The repeal measure won unanimous House approval on March 1, and President Clinton has said he will sign it.

"NARFE applauds the demise of the Depression-era retirement earnings test, but we now call for an encore performance by Congress and the White House to bring an end to two other outdated and discriminating penalties in the Social Security Act—the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP)," said Atwater

Legislation to relieve the financial loss of the GPO already has the support of almost half of the House of Representatives who are backing HR 1217, introduced by Congressman William Jefferson (D-LA). An identical bill in the Senate, S 717, by Maryland Senator Barbara Mikulski (D) has been cosponsored by 18 of her colleagues. Wide bipartisan support is evident in both chambers. The vast majority of the more than 284,000 elderly individuals effected by the GPO are women. The typical widow is impacted, Atwater explained, when she applies for survivor benefits after the loss of her husband and discovers the money she was relying on from Social Security is drastically reduced-or more frequently, eliminated entirely—because she,

herself, had worked for the government. Hundreds of thousands more federal civil servants, teachers, and other state and local government retirees lose as much as half of their own earned social security income as a result of the WEP, and many of these pensioners are hit by both provisions. "They take a double whammy in retirement because of their public service careers," Atwater concluded.

Administration Pushes FEHB Premium Plan. The Clinton administration says it soon will issue rules to allow employees of all executive branch agencies to pay their FEHB premiums with pre-tax dollars, as outlined in its recent budget proposal. It notes that similar plans already are available widely in the private sector as well as in state and local governments, the U.S. Postal Service, the federal courts and several small quasi-independent executive agencies in the banking sector. This is called a health insurance "premium conversion plan" in which the employee's taxable income is reduced by the amount of health insurance premiums the employee would otherwise have to pay. It produces savings on federal, Social Security, Medicare and, if applicable, state and local income taxes. The government contribution toward premiums would not be affected.

Retirees Left Out. The administration says that under IRS rules, such conversion plans are available only to current employees, meaning that retirees are left out—a sore spot for the National Association of Retired Federal Employees, which believes retirees should get the same break. Atwater chastised the Administration's budget saying (quote) "I find it incredibly strange that the Administration would herald a proposal to put money in the pockets of Federal employees, yet ignore the plight of those who have already given a lifetime of service to their nation through civil service employment. Retirees are today faced with the same rising health care costs, prescription drug costs, and out-of-pocket expenses as active employees. I don't understand why they should not be extended this same benefit."

NECROLOGY: Please let us know when you hear that one of our honored members has passed on, so we can share it with friends and associates.

We need your help! How do you like the newsletter? Comments? Suggestions? Do you want to help by providing articles / information?

Please call John DeMatteo 215-345-9033 (or e-mail JDemat@aol.com):

Confirm your address and telephone number, as well as your e-mail address.

CAUTION: Applying for a Census Bureau position? Recommend you sign a "Waiver Form" stating that you will not accept a job if your Federal Annuity is reduced. If you received a "Buy-out" within the last 5 years, you may lose that bonus if you accept the Census job.

NEED HELP?: Call the Federal Retiree Assistance Center, (215) 597-0419.

The Center is located at the Federal Building, Rm. 1208, 6th and Arch Sts, Philadelphia, and handles OPM/FEHB problems only (incorrect payments, non-receipt of checks, etc.). Office hours are 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. OPM can be contacted on ANY federal retirement matter by calling 1-888-767-6738. Be sure to have your PIN number handy.

OPM'S ANNUITANT EXPRESS The toll-free automated telephone system that went into operation in January of last year, for its first service permitted retirees to make federal tax withholding changes for the 2000 tax season. The number, in case you've mislaid it, is 1-800-409-6528 -- and don't forget your PIN number.

Doylestown Chapter 740, NARFE

Max Schwartz, President

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