

**NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES
CHAPTER 560 SPARTANBURG, SC**

Chartered April 12, 1956

THE 560 REPORTER
November-December 2013

Colder weather is upon us, the leaves are giving us their last hurrah, and our thoughts turn toward the holidays. One holiday, though, is especially poignant: With Veterans Day just around the corner, please remember all those who have served our country, including those who gave the ultimate sacrifice to keep us free.

We weathered the government shutdown and we're still here! The good news is we will actually be getting a **Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)**, albeit a small one, of **1.5%**. However, now that it's Open Season for the **Federal Employee Health Benefits Program (FEHPB)**, you know what your rates will be for the coming year (see the November narfe magazine, p.40). Most of the plans have increased in cost, which means our COLA will not go as far as we'd like. Also be aware there is a bill in the House of Representatives, **H.R. 1780**, that would remove **active** federal employees from the **FEHPB**, thereby shrinking the pool size and causing rates to skyrocket for the **retirees** who participate in the program. Remember that **NARFE** is continually fighting to protect our earned benefits, but to be an effective advocate, the organization needs a committed and robust membership. Please don't let your membership lapse!

September Meeting Recap:

Jeanette Keepers presided over the meeting for **President Ellen Rollins**, who was in New Hampshire for a family member's wedding. There were eight members present. It is always so heart-warming to see our faithful few, who show up in spite of their aches, pains, and on-going medical treatments, especially considering some of them are our senior-most members: A hearty shout-out to **Carmen Sherbert**, **"Hub" Bruce**, and **Ray Copeland** for their continued dedication! And a big thanks to **Laura Catto**, for providing a ride for **Carmen**, in spite of her own medical issues!

October Meeting Recap:

We were delighted to have Elaine Brackett, Sales, Marketing and Trip Planner, for Atchison Transportation Company, and the owner, Charles Atchison, as our guest speakers. Elaine had us guess Charles' age, and **Laura Catto** came closest to his youthful 84(!) and won a \$10 bill. Elaine then gave us an interesting biography of her amazingly accomplished and successful supervisor, including the history of the company that he started and built to its current size. **George Goings** gave us a Legislative Report and assured us that the government shutdown would not affect Social Security earnings for the month. He also gave us a sneak preview of changes in our specific health insurance rates.

Accolades:

Mega congratulations to **Ray Copeland**, who was a participant in the 300th Honor Flight on September 12th, to Washington, DC. About 90 World War II veterans were aboard a U.S. Air flight to visit the war memorials and to be feted for their unselfish service protecting our country. After their whirlwind tour of the city, they returned to GSP and were received by approximately 5000 staunch supporters, two high school bands and JROTC Honor Guards. He said everything, from curbside wheel chair pickup (he had a severely pinched nerve) to the site visits to the return trip, was fabulous, unforgettable and top-notch. Thank you, Ray, for all you did so many years ago!

Herbert (Hub) Bruce celebrated his 90th birthday with a luncheon given by his family at the Roebuck Fish Camp. At least seventy-five guests attended, including several NARFE chapter members. The food was delicious, the camaraderie was great and the joy on Hub's face was priceless! Many happy returns of the day!

Transitions:

We extend our deepest sympathy to **Ray Copeland** on the passing of his brother, Edwin Copeland, PhD, on October 10th in Annapolis, MD. May he rest in peace.

Meeting Reminders:

November 12 – Jinx Jenkins lined up two guest speakers for us, Jack Lawrence and John Simmons, who will be discussing the Affordable Care Act (also known as "Obamacare"). This is an important topic that we all need to know more about. Please bring your questions and certainly invite your family and friends. I'm sure we'll all be better informed after the presentation. We'll also be electing chapter officers for 2014. As a reminder, the slate of officers is as follows: **George Goings**, President; **Bill Keepers**, 1VP/Membership; **Virginia (Jinx) Jenkins**, 2VP/Program; **Peggy Hatchett**, Secretary; and **Bill Keepers**, Treasurer. Nominations from the floor will be accepted before we vote.

December 10 – Come out and enjoy a delicious buffet, great fellowship and maybe even a Christmas puzzle or two from our favorite Puzzle Meister (or is that "Mistress"?), **Ellen Rollins**. Our newly-elected chapter officers will be inducted by **Jeanette Keepers, Past SC Federation President**.

Final thoughts: It is with deep personal regret that I announce the end of my tenure as your **560 Reporter/Newsletter Editor**. I have served in this capacity for three years and it's time to hang up my hat. I'm very aware this is the only way many of our homebound or distantly-located members stay abreast of the chapter's activities and get information about fellow members. I'm truly sorry about the potential inconvenience, but unless someone comes forward to take on this position, we, as a chapter, will need to amend our Bylaws to eliminate the Newsletter.

I wish everyone a bountiful Thanksgiving Day and a wonderfully healthy, happy and peaceful Season of Joy!

Please make every effort to attend the meetings at the **Golden Corral** on W.O. Ezell Blvd., 11:30, every second Tuesday of the month, except for June, July and August!

Questions, comments, criticism and concerns are welcomed. Suggestions for guest speakers are also encouraged. Please contact me, **Jeanette M. Keepers, Chapter 560 Newsletter Editor** at 864.582.9147/864.706.3374 or at jnettie67@hotmail.com