

**NARFE**  
**MISSOURI FEDERATION**  
MINUTES OF THE SIXTY-SIXTH ANNUAL STATE CONFERENCE  
APRIL 24-25, 2019

The 66<sup>th</sup> annual state Conference of the NARFE Missouri Federation was held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Independence, MO, April 24-25, 2019. Registration began at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, April 24, and continued until the close of the conference on Thursday, April 25. The host chapter was 2041 Blue Springs.

Following a luncheon for conference attendees that was sponsored by Blue Cross/Blue Shield, host chapter member and Immediate Past President of the Missouri Federation Robert Hagedorn called the conference to order at 1:05 p.m. An invocation was offered by Reverend Trista Soendker Nicholson of Red Bridge Methodist Church, followed by the posting of colors and Pledge of Allegiance by the Sons of the American Revolution.

Conference host chapter President Mary Barber welcomed conference attendees and introduced Federation President Laura Cowart. President Cowart accepted the gavel from Ms. Barber, thanked the Conference Committee and host chapter, and welcomed attendees.

President Cowart called on Registration Committee Chair Marcy Nelson, who reported 70 Missouri Federation members in attendance, as well as two Kansas Federation members.

President Cowart called on Rules Committee Chair Walter Cowart, who noted that the conference rules were distributed at registration.

Secretary Sherry Haskins announced that the approval of the minutes of the 2018 65th State Conference in St. Louis had been accomplished at the July 26, 2018 Federation Executive Board (FEB) meeting. The minutes of this conference will be approved at the first regular meeting of the FEB, i.e., July 25, 2019.

Treasurer Marcy Nelson presented the Federation April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019 financial statement, which will be filed for audit.

President Cowart reported that:

- The Federation currently includes 26 chapters, with 13 chapters represented at the conference.
- Conference attendees included six members for whom this was their first conference.
- There are currently 3926 NARFE members who reside in Missouri, including approximately 1600 National Only members.
- As of March 1, NARFE Headquarters has been sending out newly-designed membership renewal forms.
- The “go live” date for Headquarters’ new Association Management System – Member Experience (AMS-MX) (which will replace the OAM (Online Activities Module) that is used for generation of reports by NARFE federation and chapter officers) has been postponed to June 1 (from May 1).

- President Cowart attended the Missouri Rural Letter Carriers Booster Conference on March 30 in Poplar Bluff. Most attendees had heard of NARFE, and President Cowart commended Federation 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President and Membership Coordinator Emerson Kretzer on his outreach efforts in promoting NARFE to USPS employees and annuitants.
- Page 20 of the last Federation newsletter included a Call for Federation Trainees. President Cowart encouraged members to consider volunteering for this program.
- President Cowart also encouraged members to contact Newsletter Editor Mary Lamping with submissions for the “Members Forum” section of each newsletter.

President Cowart introduced keynote speaker Kathryn Hensley, NARFE National Secretary/Treasurer. Ms. Hensley brought greetings from NARFE Headquarters staff, including President Ken Thomas. In her address, “2019 Headquarters Update”, she noted that

- NARFE is the go-to resource for the federal community, the media, Congress, and the public.
- During the government shutdown, NARFE led a multi-pronged effort to inform and serve members, including maintaining a “shutdown central” webpage, producing a webinar, and reaching out to media organizations (Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, CBS News, Yahoo!, Huffington Post, Government Matters, etc.).
- NARFE’s Advocacy Team reaches out to members of Congress, which recognizes and trusts our expertise. In addition, grassroots advocacy by NARFE members - including visiting legislators’ offices, sending messages via the Legislative Action Center on narfe.org, attending conferences, etc. – is critical to NARFE’s effort to promote policies that maintain a strong and effective federal workforce, and to protect earned benefits of employees and annuitants.
- NARFE’s FEDcon18 and LEGcon19 training conferences welcomed hundreds of members and strengthened their advocacy skills.
- New initiatives are currently being rolled out, including the AMS, which allows engagement with members in a more data-driven capacity; as well as rebranding tools (logos, icons, etc.) to more effectively communicate who we are as an association.

Secretary/Treasurer Hensley then led a question and answer session which included discussions of chapter bylaws, NARFE PAC fund disbursements, membership sustainability, etc.

President Cowart introduced conference exhibitors GEHA, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, and Aetna, and noted additional national NARFE sponsors HearUSA and Nationwide.

Following a brief recess called by President Cowart, Public Information Officer Rasheed Brown of the Jackson County Sheriff’s Department introduced Detective Rick Berger, who discussed safety tips in response to scams and fraud aimed at seniors.

President Cowart called a recess of the conference general session until Thursday morning. Conference committees met following the recess. Evening activities included a cash bar, a banquet, and an auction to benefit Alzheimer’s research (called by Emerson Kretzer, who was assisted by Joseph Manno and members of the Alzheimer’s Committee).

At 7:30 a.m. on Thursday, April 25, chapter officer training sessions were conducted for chapter presidents, treasurers, and secretaries (by Federation Immediate Past President Robert Hagedorn, Federation Treasurer Marcy Nelson, and Federation Secretary Sherry Haskins, respectively).

The convention general session was again called to order by President Cowart at 8:00 a.m. She introduced Region V Field Vice President Cindy Renee Blythe, who brought greetings from the other Region V federations (Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota). Field VP Blythe updated conference attendees on NARFE regional and headquarters news, including

- concern regarding membership losses;
- recruitment initiatives, including enhanced “Member Perks” (discounted tickets to movies and theme parks, etc.);
- studies to increase non-dues revenue, including possible lease or sale of NARFE property;
- robust grassroots advocacy, noting that Region V had a representative from every federation at LEGcon19;
- NARFE’s renegotiated Memorandum of Understanding with FEEA (Federal Employee Education & Assistance Fund), reducing NARFE’s administrative fees by consolidating funds and shifting determination of Scholarship Fund distributions to NARFE Headquarters;
- reminder regarding the May 15 due date for chapters and federations to file their annual 990N with the IRS to retain tax exempt status;
- Region V’s “College of NARFE Knowledge (CONK)” (regional conference), September 24-26, 2019, at the Hilton Garden Inn in Sioux City, IA (\$114 + tax per night, including breakfast; agenda pending, but will include AMS training).

Field VP Blythe concluded with a question and answer session which included a discussion of chapter and federation influence regarding NARFE policy, procedures, etc. since NARFE’s change to “one member/one vote”.

President Cowart introduced guest speaker U.S. Representative Emanuel Cleaver, 5<sup>th</sup> District, MO. Representative Cleaver noted the critical function the House of Representatives performs in ensuring equilibrium among the branches of the federal government. He stated that representatives most directly represent the will of the people in that elections are held every two years, and any interim vacancies must be filled in a timely manner by election (not appointment). Representative Cleaver issued a compelling call to action for citizens to hold public servants in all branches of the federal government accountable, to ensure officials carry out their duties as outlined in the U.S. Constitution, and specifically to act against any attempts to erode the power of the legislative branch of government. Representative Cleaver thanked NARFE members for their service, and encouraged members to send letters to him that he can read on the House floor (noting that House proceedings are televised on C-SPAN).

Region V and Missouri Federation Alzheimer’s Coordinator Lois Nowlin thanked the Alzheimer’s committee members, auctioneers, and the auction donors and participants, noting that the silent and live auctions raised \$507 and \$1250, respectively, for Alzheimer’s research. Additional donations received brought the total funds collected during the conference to \$1892. Ms. Nowlin presented awards to Chapter 2071/W. St. Louis County for highest auction funds raised, and to Chapter 1915/N. Central for highest per capita per member donation and Chapter 112/Greater St. Louis for highest total donation amount for Missouri chapters during the past year.

President Cowart called for the following committee reports:

- Audit – Chair Robert Hagedorn reported that the audit was successful, with all documentation in order.
- Budget – Chair Marcy Nelson noted that the budget shows a surplus, and that the full budget will be published in the next federation newsletter.
- Membership – Chair Emerson Kretzer stated that the committee discussed strategic recruitment, including advertising, and challenged each federation member to recruitment one new member this year.
- Legislative – Chair Gregory Campbell noted plans to contact chapter presidents to determine how legislative information is being disseminated, and to urge member involvement and advocacy.
- NARFE PAC – Chair Elbert Williams thanked committee members for manning the NARFE PAC table at the conference, as well as table visitors. He reported that, during the conference, PAC had collected \$640 and had signed up one new sustainer.
- Time & Place – Chair Wes Duwe reported that the committee is in discussion with two possible 2021 conference host chapters.

President Cowart called a brief recess, which was followed by an onscreen presentation by John Hatton, NARFE Director of Legislative and Political Affairs. Mr. Hatton’s presentation, “Advocacy Update”, included

- 115<sup>th</sup> Congress Recap,
- 116<sup>th</sup> Congress Legislative Priorities,
- Grassroots Advocacy, and
- NARFE PAC.

Mr. Hatton then led a question and answer session with discussions of congressional budgets for fiscal year 2020, NARFE PAC disbursements, GPO (Government Pension Offset), outreach efforts to new members of Congress, and the federal debt ceiling.

Secretary Sherry Haskins conducted the memorial service, noting 103 deaths of federation members from April 1, 2018 through April 15, 2019. As the names of the members were read by Ms. Haskins, Congressional District Leaders (CDLs) lit candles in memory of their district’s members.

President Cowart recognized five past presidents in attendance: Linda Kurz (2007-2009), Ron Peters (2009-2012), Eric Bahl (2012-2014), Joseph Manno (2014-2016), and Robert Hagedorn (2016-2018).

Chapter 11/Springfield President Wes Duwe invited all members to the 67<sup>th</sup> Missouri Federation Conference, April 22 & 23, 2020 at the Oasis Hotel & Convention Center, 2546 N. Glenstone Ave., Springfield, MO 65803.

A raffle was conducted for a free night’s stay at the host hotel, with proceeds donated to Alzheimer’s Research. Lois Nowlin’s winning ticket was drawn.

President Cowart called a recess for lunch; following which, the conference was called back to order at 1:00 p.m.

Robert Hagedorn introduced guest speaker Samantha Shepherd, JD, LLM, CELA. Ms. Shepherd practices exclusively in the areas of Elder Law, Estate Planning and Special Needs Law. She presented three case studies to illustrate common misconceptions regarding these areas, and provided guidance when seeking legal assistance.

Ross Apter, NARFE Political Associate, gave onscreen presentations on Grassroots Advocacy and CDL (Congressional District Leader) Training. Mr. Apter encouraged attendees to sign up for NARFE's legislative newsletter, note NARFE's legislative priorities and the Congressional calendar (especially recesses when legislators are in their home districts/states), use NARFE's Legislative Action Center, sign up for legislators' newsletters, host and/or attend candidate forums, and work with their CDLs, who serve as liaisons between NARFE members and legislators.

A 50/50 raffle was conducted for \$118 (one-half of the \$236 raised). Glen Richter's winning ticket was drawn. A second ticket was drawn for a gift basket, which was won by Jeanette Rosenkoetter.

President Cowart asked attendees to complete the Conference evaluation, and adjourned the conference at 2:54 p.m.

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