

**NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES
SAN FRANCISCO
CHAPTER 65
SENTINEL**

HERMAN BRACEY, EDITOR

Meets 3rd Wednesday each month, Odd Fellows Hall, 26 – 7th Street, near Market, SF

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JANUARY 2008 NEWSLETTER

**OUR NEXT MEETING IS ON JANUARY 16, 2008 AT THE ODD FELLOWS HALL, 26 7TH ST, SF
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 10:30 AM; MEMBERSHIP MEETING 1:00 PM 6th FLOOR
SOCIAL HOUR, DOUGHNUTS AND COFFEE, BINGO 11:30 AM
CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

JAN 16 REGULAR MEETING. PROGRAM TBA
FEB 20 REGULAR MEETING PROGRAM TBA
SEP 7-11 NATIONAL CONVENTION IN LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY
MAY 1-3-2009 2nd CSFC BIENNIAL CONVENTION CONCORD, CALIFORNIA

PRESIDENT: JANE RAMOS, 875 SANCHEZ ST., SF, CA. 94114; 826-3337 chilberg@ix.netcom.com

GREETINGS AND CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL CHAPTER MEMBERS WITH BIRTHDAYS AND/OR ANNIVERSARIES IN JANUARY.... A new year; A fresh start; A chance for all of us to be the "changes we wish to see." Your Chapter officers seek new ideas and your help. Please step forward and volunteer and perhaps be ready to take over any one of the offices next year ---- "We are the people; we have been looking for." We know that we have many talented members among the 800 members of Chapter 65. Don't hide your light under a bushel!

Our speaker at the December luncheon, Helen Zajac, Immediate Past President of the California Federation of Chapters, reminded us that it's still very important to contact our representatives and give them your personal stories of how the GPO and/or WEP affect you directly. It seems that personal stories carry a great deal of weight with Congress. Also, among the more important issues being fought by NARFE are a State tax bill to exempt all or part of public pensions, and the premium conversion bill which would have an average impact of \$820/year per annuitant in tax savings.

Helen announced upcoming Chapter training (details in February) and leadership development training in April at convenient locations; more on this later. And, another reminder -- NARFE's 30th National Biannual Convention in Kentucky will be in September 7-11, 2008. Why not plan to attend and combine the trip with an exploration of sites on the East Coast. Any member of the Chapter is eligible to attend. Normally the Chapter pays the registration fees and provides some monies towards personal expenses.

Currently Chapter 65 is invited to participate in two Pre-Retirement Seminars and a Health Fair during the year. We are in the process of developing teams to make the presentation and staff the tables so the pressure is not always on the same people. This can be surprisingly enjoyable, as it's a chance to talk with today's federal employees - and future retirees. Can you be on a list of those that we can call for help?

Thanks for supporting NARFE through your membership. Even if you aren't able to actively participate in the Chapter, we all appreciate your support and welcome your attendance at our monthly meetings.

ALZHEIMER'S: JESSE RAMOS; 826-3337

The Chapter wishes to publicly thank and acknowledge the generous contribution from Ralph Hockley - a Chapter 65 member now living in Houston, Texas - to the NARFE-Alzheimer's Research Fund. His contribution will be used exclusively to support research efforts toward finding a cure for this terrible disease that mostly afflicts individuals 65 and older.

This year Chapter 65 members donated through this chapter a total of \$380 to the NARFE-Alzheimer's Research fund, and \$790 to the Alzheimer's Association to support programs and services that help families and individuals in Northern California cope with the disease, and we recently learned that Chapter 65 member Garry Kataoka has continued to generously contribute directly to the Alzheimer's Association of Northern California.

I'm certain that the Alzheimer's Association and the many persons they help through their research efforts and their services to families and individuals coping with Alzheimer's are extremely grateful for the contributions they received from chapter 65 members this year.

2008 OFFICERS INSTALLED:

Once again Chapter 65 has been fortunate to have members who are concerned about keeping our chapter vital and have stepped forward to become the chapter's leaders for 2008. This year Helen Zajac, Immediate Past President of the CSFC, was on hand to install our new officers: **President-Jane Ramos; 1ST Vice President-Frances Chan; 2ND Vice President-Beatrice Bertwell; Secretary-Martha Raup; and Treasurer-Jesus Ramos.** During the installation ceremony, the members in attendance are asked to verbally and publicly offer the new officers their support for coming forth and giving of their time and talents. I would suggest those of you who were not at the ceremony contact (call, write, e-mail) our officers and offer them your support and congratulations.

HAVE A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

DO NOT DELAY
TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL

January 2008

Remember....RECRUITING is everyone's job!!

NATIONAL WEB SITE: (<http://www.narfe.org>); CSFC WEB SITE: (<http://www.csfcnarfe.org>) CHAPTER 65 WEB SITE: (<http://www.narfe65.org>). NARFE DUES: Currently National Dues are \$29.00 and Chapter 65 Dues are \$8.00 annually. Mail check for the full \$37.00, along with your DUES RENEWAL NOTICE, to NARFE, Membership Services, 606 Washington St, Alexandria, Va. 22314-1914.

SERVICE OFFICER: DAVID GARCIA 510 235-7750

Important numbers: OPM 1-888-767-6738 (Administrative Problems); NARFE 1-800-456-8410 (Membership Problems); SOCIAL SECURITY 1-800-772-1213 (Life Cycle Problems); LTC 1-800 582-3337 (For Applications and Information Kits); OPM Toll Number 1-724-794-5216....Before leaving Washington, for a holiday recess, Congress increased funding for Social Security and protected physicians from receiving cuts in their Medicare payments, but did not stop the overpayments made to Medicare Advantage plans. Monday night, the House approved a \$515.7 billion domestic spending measure, 253 to 154. The funding level included for the Social Security Administration (SSA) in the measure is \$150 million over the President's budget request – and \$451 million over the FY 2007 level of funding. Language in the bill will also provide SSA with the ability to address the backlog in handling disability claims.

Also on Tuesday, the Senate sent the House legislation that would temporarily protect physicians from a scheduled cut in their Medicare payments, while extending funding for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) through March 2009. "The Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP Extension Act of 2007," S. 2499, would grant physicians a 0.5 percent increase while delaying a scheduled 10% pay cut for six months. To attract Republican support and avert a veto, the \$6 billion package would be funded with relatively uncontroversial Medicare cuts. Democrats had long eyed Medicare Advantage (MA) private insurance plans, which are paid by the government at higher rates than traditional Medicare, to pay for a bill. But according to *Congressional Quarterly*, a White House veto threat - backed by Senate Republicans - forced Democrats to give up on almost all their early priorities for the legislation, including an ambitious expansion of SCHIP, a longer-lasting shield against cuts in Medicare payments to doctors, and the reduction of MA overpayments. The cost of the measure would instead be offset in part by taking money from a "stabilization fund" meant to pay private insurers for offering new services to beneficiaries in areas with few Medicare services. "It looks like we will have a government spending bill, Medicare legislation, and SCHIP funding," said **George J. Kourpias**, President of the Alliance. "But it would have been so much better if Senate leaders had been able to pass the Medicare Advantage cuts they wanted, so seniors could stop subsidizing insurance companies." (*from the Alliance for Retired American*)

LEGISLATION: BEATRICE BERTWELL; 650-754-9962

The Congress passed an omnibus appropriations bill (H.R. 2764) containing 11 unfinished annual appropriations that comply with President Bush's overall ceiling for discretionary spending, \$932.8 billion. Furthermore, first the Senate, then the House voted to add Iraq war spending without the provisions opposed by the Administration. The omnibus contains pay parity for the civil service, who will eventually see a raise of 3.5 percent that was approved earlier for the military services.

Congress also cleared legislation, S. 2499, to temporarily increase Medicare reimbursements to doctors by .5 percent. If it were not for this six-month patch, reimbursements would be reduced 10 percent beginning in the new year under Medicare cost containment formulas. S. 2499 also extends SCHIP funding for 15 months. Another legislative patch also was cleared for the President. This one, H.R. 3996, suspends the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) for one year. Without any action, the AMT could have hiked the 2007 taxes of some 23 million taxpayers, but in passing the suspension, Congress defied its own pay-as-you-go rules and passed the tax extension without any offsetting revenues. I took these paragraphs from the weekly hotline message. It is available to callers toll free at 1-877-217-8234, posted on NARFE's website, www.narfe.org, and broadcast to more than 47,000 GEMS e-mail addresses.

TREASURER'S REPORT: JESSE RAMOS 826-3337

Balance forward	\$5,047.47
Income	\$ 525.44
Expenses	\$ 476.57
Balance at 10/31/07	\$5,090.34

SUNSHINE:

Our prayers and condolences go out to the family of **Clara Fanella, Charles O'Donnell, and Harry Rosenfeld.**

MEMBERSHIP: HERMAN BRACEY, 651 COLE ST APT 2, SF, CA. 94117; 668-2337

A warm welcome to **Marvin J Brook, Caroline Bunts, Angela Corcoran, Susan A Fong, Sally G Galway, Carey Houk, Ted V Lyles, Reginald H Saw, Dennis J Setlock, Maryann Swazo. Mary B Toatley and Laura Ware.**

Correction, last month **Margaret Y Tong** was listed as **Margaret Y Wong.**