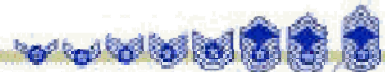




Air Force Sergeants Association



Chapter 155 & A155



Portsmouth-By-The-Sea

3rd Quarter FY2008



News From The Chapter President

Wishing all a Happy and Prosperous New Year, and hope to see some of you more often at chapter meetings. First let me thank John Symington for his tenure as president, he kept the ship on course. I think the best way to thank the others is to recognize what they do for you and others, their support makes the AFSA chapter work.

The auxiliary officers Anne Sowers and Peggy Caldwell are always there when you need them. Anne makes up the Newsletter, the meeting minutes and prints the agenda. Peggy takes care of the money and Shirley takes care of coupons for shipment to overseas bases.

Al Caldwell, if you know Al I don't have to say any more and for those who don't Al has forgot more about AFSA then I will ever know. He is involved in the division, he has contacts nationwide. Al tells me what to do. Ralph Appleby goes to the Veterans home once every month and to the VA hospital (bingo) also once every month. He brings things that helps make their life a little easier. Pete Bresciano does our legislative work, meets with the Martins Point board regularly and now is doing publicity for chapter events and meetings.

John Symington is our representative on the NH Veterans Advisory Council, they meet once each month. Ray Drapeau is our representative on the Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce. On behalf of the over 700 chapter members in New Hampshire, "Thank You" To you and all who kept this chapter together all these years

The 2008 Division convention is Friday April 25 thru Sunday April 27 at the Holiday Inn Holyoke MA.



News From The Auxiliary President

Happy New Year! We are looking forward to seeing more members at our monthly meetings since we have changed the day and time to the second Tuesday at 4:30 at the American Red Cross, 4 Arboretum Drive at Pease International Tradeport.

For those of you who may not know, Debra Cantor, daughter of Peggy and Al Caldwell died suddenly due natural causes on December 17th. The Auxiliary wishes to extend our thoughts and prayers to Peggy and Al and Debbie's husband, Evan Cantor.

Chapter Officers

President

Richard Dolbec

Vice President

Al Caldwell

1st Trustee

Ralph Appleby

2nd Trustee

Lena Grenier

3rd Trustee

Pete Bresciano

Senior Advisor

John Symington

Treasurer

Al Caldwell

Secretary

Anne Sowers

Auxiliary Officers

President

Anne Sowers

Vice President

Peggy Caldwell

1st Trustee

Shirley MacGregor

Senior Advisor/Treasurer

Peggy Caldwell

AFSA

Protecting and defending the quality-of-life benefits of the "TOTAL AIR FORCE" Enlisted Corps and their families since 1961

BJ'S WHOLESALE WAREHOUSE INCENTIVE

BJ's and AFSA are teaming up to offer savings. When you purchase a Membership or renew/extend your current membership through the Chapter the fee will be \$35, a savings of \$10 to you. Applications are available on our website at: <http://afsa155.org>. This offer will run from **March 3rd until March 24th**.

TAX INFORMATION



Chapter President, Richard Dolbec presented Family Readiness Program Coordinator, Bonnie Rice, Thanksgiving baskets that were given to local military families. This is the second year that the Chapter has donated Thanksgiving baskets.

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) began mailing tax-related documentation to military retirees in mid December. W-2s, 1099Rs and 1099-INTs for service members and remaining DFAS customers are projected to be distributed throughout the Jan. To see a list of anticipated mailing dates go to <http://www.dfas.mil/news/2007pressreleases/release11070002.html>

Just a reminder, DFAS customers with *myPay* (<https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>) access can retrieve their tax statements electronically up to two weeks sooner than those relying on regular mail delivery.



GROUND BREAKING CEREMONIES HELD

The Veteran's Cemetery in Boscawen, NH was the setting on Veteran's Day, November 11, 2007 for the Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Air Force Memorial. Participating in the event, from left to right are: Senator John Sununu, MajGen Kenneth Clark (the NH Adjutant General), Gov. John Lynch, Ed Murphy (representing Service Credit Union - a major contributor), Kevin Grady (president AFA NH chapter), CMSgt (ret) Richard Dolbec (president AFSA NH chapter) and MajGen (ret) Joseph Simeone (president of NH Veterans Cemetery Association and member of the Air Force Memorial committee).

UPDATES ON HEATHCARE

Submitted by Peter Bresciano

The Task Force on the Future of Military Health, a 14-member panel, hand-picked by the Pentagon, presented its final report that contains several recommendations to sharply increase out-of-pocket expenses for many TRICARE beneficiaries. These include:

- A new annual enrollment fee of \$120 per year, indexed to increase annually for each TRICARE For Life Beneficiary.
- A new annual enrollment fee for TRICARE Standard, indexed to increase. This fee will be phased-in over a 5-year period to a level of \$60 for individual coverage and \$120 for families.
- An Increase in deductibles for TRICARE Standard from \$300 a year for families and \$150 for individuals to \$600 and \$300 respectively.
- An increase in TRICARE Prime enrollment fees over a 5-year period, with annual indexed increases. These fee increases, based on the amount of retired pay, would double for some and nearly quadruple for others. For example:
 - Single retirees currently pay an annual TRICARE premium of \$230. After the 5-year phase in period, individuals receiving less than 20K in retired pay would pay \$450 (\$220 increase); under 40K, \$595(\$365 increase); and 40K or more \$875 a year (a \$645 increase).
 - Retirees with eligible family members pay an annual TRICARE premium of \$460 now. After the 5-year phase-in period, retirees receiving less than 20K per year in retired pay would pay \$900(\$440 increase); under 40K, \$1,190 (\$730 increase); and those over 40K, \$1,750 (\$1,290 increase).
- And pharmacy co-pays would steeply increase, generics would jump from \$3 to \$15; brand name from \$9 to \$25; and non-formulary from \$22 to \$45. The panel also recommends the creation of a "fourth tier" of un-specified cost for more expensive and special medications.

Look for Pentagon adoption of these proposals in the fiscal year 2009 budget request. Congress prohibits any fee increases prior to Oct. 1, 2008.

We need to press DoD and the members of Congress to honor the Nation's obligation to the men and women who dedicated the best 20 to 30 years of their lives in defense of this country. Service members have kept their promise to defend and protect; now it's time for the country to keep its promise to them.

Tricare

Congress put a temporary 6-month fix to the cut in Medicare Physician Reimbursement. In fact, they approved a very slight increase in payments of 0.5 percent. This temporary solution will necessitate a re-visit of the issue before the end of June 2008 as all the cuts would still go into effect then if not permanently fixed or postponed before then.

VA Legislation

Congress failed to fully complete its promised \$6.7 billion increase in spending for VA's health care and benefit programs. Instead, Congress decided to redirect \$3.7 billion of the proposed increase as "emergency contingency funding," available only in the instance of a declared emergency. By shifting over half of the proposed VA increase, Congress freed up resources for a number of other leadership "priorities," which include increases in AMTRAK funding, heating assistance programs, and an extensive array of special earmarks and parochial spending (amounting to more than 9,000 projects, costing nearly \$11 billion).

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January

- 1 – Happy New Year
- 8 – Chapter Membership Meeting....4:30
- 13 – VA Bingo- Manchester
- 21 – Veteran’s Home, Volunteer meeting

February

- 10 – VA Bingo – Manchester
- 11 – Veteran’s Day
- 12 – General Membership Meeting 4:30
- 18 - Veteran’s Home, Volunteer meeting

March

- 9 – VA Bingo - Manchester
- 11 – General Membership Meeting 4:30
- 17 – Veteran’s Home Volunteer meeting



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