



With prescription drug costs skyrocketing, many senior citizens have come up with other ways to obtain their medications.
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Pat Hoban Memorial

Pat, the long time executive director for our friends at the Washington State School Retirees' Association, died after a brief illness. We have sent the WSSRA Scholarship Foundation a \$100 memorial contribution.

Legal News

The Court of Appeals has scheduled oral argument on the Section 195 COLA case on January 9, 2003 in Tacoma.

Initiative I-790 (LEOFF II)

The RPEC PAC contributed \$1200 to help pass I-790, the initiative establishing an independent governing board for LEOFF II. Legislators are closely watching this initiative, and many privately comment that, should it pass, there will be major impetus to treat all retirement systems equally. There will undoubtedly be legal challenges to the initiative once it passes. Nonetheless, its success would give our quest for a voice and a vote in the governance of the PERS systems a major boost.

Hardly Surprising

from ARA Friday Alert, August 23, 2002

The Washington Post reported this week that the health care industry spent more money than any other industry to lobby Members of Congress last year - a total of \$234,724,579. "This may explain why private insurance companies fared so well under the House's prescription drug bill (H.R.4954)," notes Edward F. Coyle, Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans. According to Coyle, "Older Americans and their families can still out vote the health care industry on November 5 because at the ballot box it's still one person, one vote!"

Reminders

If you move, remarry or just change your phone number, please call the Council office at 1-800-562-6097 and let us update our records so that we can better keep you informed.

Did you ever notice when you blow in a dog's face he gets mad at you? But when you take him in a car, he sticks his head out the window!



Retired Public Employees Council of Washington

November 2002 www.rpecwa.org Toll-Free: 1-800-562-6097 Direct: 360-352-8262

RPEC EXECUTIVE BOARD

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President's Message

from George Masten

There is no easy way to say that dues are going up. Nobody likes to see more money taken from their retirement check, but your RPEC dues are an investment – one of the best you can make.

Delegates at our September convention approved raising the dues by \$2.00 per month, effective Jan. 1, 2003. That's less than the cost of one latte or a couple cups of coffee. The increase will be divided between the Council office (\$1.65), and your local chapter (\$0.35). Dues haven't been raised since 1996, and costs have gone up.

What do you get for your RPEC dues? Quite a bargain!

- **Advocacy.** We pay an attorney to advise us on legal issues related to our pension system and to litigate when the state refuses to budge.
- **Service.** RPEC maintains a full-time office with a professional staff. Their job is to serve the members in every way they can, whether they're producing meeting notices and newsletters for chapters, or helping members who call with problems and don't know where else to turn. Rent, salaries, postage, phones (including a toll-free number for you to use) and printing are a few of our costs.
- **Political action and legislation.** You hire a professional lobbyist to promote our legislation. He also educates our members in using the political process and generates grassroots support for our issues. Your PAC makes contributions to political candidates who can help us.
- **Communication.** RPEC produces a monthly newsletter to keep you informed on issues such as governance, legislation, health care and what other chapters are doing. Your staff is updating our brochures and printed materials. We have a terrific web site and a successful media program.
- **Opportunity.** If you want to hold an office or work on a committee, you don't need to be wealthy. RPEC reimburses the expenses of members who want to serve their organization.

I know that every penny counts, but you have to count what every penny does. Your RPEC dues harder for you than any investment you can make.

HCA/PEBB 2003 Medical/Dental Coverage Changes - PLEASE NOTE!!

For those members who obtain their medical/dental/prescription drug coverage through the Health Care Authority/Public Employees Benefits Board, please note that: OPEN ENROLLMENT ends November 30th.

Some plans are no longer available in some areas. If your plan is no longer available in your area, you need to select a different plan. Otherwise, coverage could be delayed.

Premiums and benefits have changed. Please research your current plan and the options available to you.

- Aetna U.S. Healthcare will no longer be available.
- Community Health Plan of WA will not accept new members in 2003.
- Premera Blue Cross has consolidated Premera BC/HealthPlus and Premera BC/MSA into Premera Blue Cross/Foundation.
- Prescription drug copays have all pretty much doubled in cost. Uniform Medical Plan is reclassifying prescription drugs into a three tier plan.

The state's subsidy for Medicare-eligible retirees will increase in 2003 from \$85.84 to \$92.74 per month.

If you have a specific doctor you want to stay with, be sure to contact your medical plan to verify (s)he will contract with that plan in 2003.

If you want to make changes to your plan:

- Read "Changes to your 2003 coverage" from PEBB.
- See if the medical plan you desire is available in the county where you reside.
- Review the 2003 rates.
- Review "Medical Benefits Comparison" from PEBB and compare the plans.

The HCA/PEBB has also cut the number of benefits fairs from 30 to 16.

Remember, enrollment ends November 30th!

To contact HCA/PEBB call 1-800-200-1004 or log on to <http://www.pebb.hca.wa.gov> for more information.

Social Security Gets 1.4 Percent Increase

WASHINGTON (AP) - Social Security recipients will get a 1.4 percent cost-of-living increase in their monthly checks next year, the smallest increase in four years, reflecting a slowdown in inflation caused by the weak economy.

The increase, which will show up in January Social Security checks, is down from this year's boost of 2.6 percent. In 2001, benefit checks went up by an even larger 3.5 percent, the biggest cost-of-living rise in nine years.

The average monthly check for individual retirees will rise from \$882 currently to \$895 starting in January, an increase of \$13. For the average couple receiving Social Security benefits, their monthly check will go from \$1,463 to \$1,483, an increase of \$20.

JCPP Hires New State Actuary

The Joint Committee on Pension Policy hired a new state actuary, Matthew M. Smith, at its October 16 meeting. He has public and private sector experience and began his career as an actuarial assistant in Washington state. Mr. Smith is a certified actuary.

The remainder of the JCPP meeting dealt with legislation related to routine matters. We expect governance to be discussed at the November 13 meeting.

Investment Board Names New Director

from *The Olympian* (Friday, Oct. 18, 2002)

Joe Dear, the former chief of staff to Gov. Gary Locke, will take over next month as executive director of the Washington state Investment Board.

"The board feels extremely fortunate to hire an executive director with the management ability, investment experience and integrity of Mr. Dear," said John Charles, director of the state Department of Retirement Systems. Charles, oversaw the search as chairman of the State Investment Board.

Dear previously served as assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor, director of the state Department of Labor and Industries and chairman of the investment board from 1989 to 1991. He served as Locke's chief of staff from 1997 to 2001.

* * * Corrections * * *

In the Special Convention Issue, under items donated to the Legal Table, the two bottles of Berringer wine were donated by Zona Gail Spaeth, Chapter 13, Spokane.

Also in the Special Convention Issue, under Banquet Awards, it was erroneously reported that Norm St. Denis presented Gloria Champeaux with a plaque from District #1, consisting of Chapters 6,7,8,37 & 41". The plaque was actually from Chapter 6 and was presented by Bob Keithley, President of Chapter 6.

In the August 2002 newsletter in "What happens when you work for the state after retirement?". We erroneously stated the law (SB 5937) expires on 6-30-04 for TRS and 12-31-04 for PERS. Governor Locke vetoed the sunset of the bill, so unless new legislation is passed, it will remain in effect indefinitely. Thanks to Mike Watson, Olympia for pointing this out.

Murphy's Law
If at first you don't succeed,
destroy all evidence that you tried.

Chapter One (Buckley) Gets Local Recognition

The history, purpose and current activities of Chapter One were featured in an April issue of the Enumclaw Carrier Herald. For your information, the chapter's history is reprinted here.

Dale Clark, Chapter One's Vice-President responsible for membership activities, reports that aside from advertising their meetings in the local newspaper, officers and chapter members:

- ✓ carry a membership packet in their pocket or purse (because you never know when you are going to run into somebody you know who has retired or will soon).
- ✓ invite non-member contacts to the next chapter meeting and the chapter buys them a lunch.
- ✓ keep members informed which is very important. (They have a monthly newsletter to let their members know what happened at their last meeting as well as retirement issues.
- ✓ mix business with pleasure (every other meeting members enjoy activities like pinochle, cribbage, bingo or other activities suggested by members.

Executive Director's Report

from *Cassandra de la Rosa*

Your new officers took no time getting to work with a 5½-hour Executive Committee meeting held October 18, 2002! Here are highlights of what will be recommended to the board at its meeting in Olympia on Friday, December 6.

Convention 2003 – The committee is considering basic parliamentary training, a meeting for chairs, new delegates training, and ways to make debate work better by using an overhead information system. Watch for changes next year. Finding a location for 2003 is a priority, and we want to establish the 2004 location soon. Wenatchee, Spokane, Everett and Bellingham are possibilities.

2003 Board Meetings – A constitutional amendment passed requiring that two board meetings be held in eastern Washington and two in western Washington for each of the next two years. Here are the dates (all Tuesdays) and cities. Plan to attend! We'll let you know when we have exact locations.

Feb. 18, 2003 – Olympia; May 20, 2003 – Spokane; August 19, 2003 – Wenatchee; December 9, 2003 – Everett

Legislators' Report Cards – Expect to receive a "report card" on legislators' votes on issues of importance to us after the 2003 session.

Resolutions and Amendments – Chapter presidents soon will receive final copies of resolutions and amendments that passed at the convention, and an outline of each set.

WFSE Convention 2002

The Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE) held their 2002 convention in Spokane this year and a few noteworthy items came from that.

Howard Jorgenson Organizing Award - Howard Jorgenson, WFSE President from 1972 to 1997 presented the award named in his honor to Steve Hiatt and Joan Gallagher.

George Masten Courage Award - The 6 year old award was renamed this year after George Masten, WFSE Executive Director from 1974 to 1985. Howard Jorgenson unveiled the new name to the surprised George Masten in front of the convention September 28. The award was presented to Rep. Sandra Romero, 22nd District.

Resolutions - Of interest is one of WFSE's resolution passed at their convention, Resolution #3 - Rule of 80, in which the convention voted to seek state payment of medical premiums for state employees whose age plus years of service equals 80 or more starting at retirement. (*Submitted by Local 1066, Washington State University*).