



Retired Public Employees Council of Washington (RPEC) Chapter 46

August 2022 NEWSLETTER

Join us at our

ANNUAL POTLUCK PICNIC

Wednesday August 17th

Gather at 11:30AM

Marianne and Jay Wilkins' House
20917 SE 12th Street, Sammamish, WA 98075

Feel free to bring a spouse or fellow retired public employee you think might become a member to this **outdoor** event. Enjoy a potluck picnic lunch. Get to know your chapter officers. Catch up with who has new grandchildren or great grandchildren, who's moved and who's looking to downsize. Talk to old friends and maybe meet some new ones. We hope to have as our guests some of the candidates in the upcoming RPEC election.

Please bring a salad, side dish or dessert. **Call Marianne Wilkins at (425) 391-4284 or email marianne@msn.com or text (206-799-977) to let her know you are coming** (so we know how many tables to set up) **and get driving directions if needed.** It is easy access with lots of parking, open space, and gardens to view. It is located next to Ebright Creek Park. All are welcome.

UNIFORM MEDICAL PLAN CLASSIC UPDATE

With little notice, **RPEC Executive Director Laurie Weidner** got out the word to RPEC and affiliated groups of Washington State retirees concerning the PEBB Board's intention to eliminate the Uniform Medical Classic plan for retirees, to leave only Medicare Advantage Plans as alternatives. Over 300 of us showed up at the last PEBB Board meeting, and your president was one of those who testified about the importance of continuing this plan. The board resolved to have public hearings and not make a decision about the plan until January 2024. If you are a member of this plan and want it to continue to be an option, watch for information about how you might be involved in giving feedback to the PEBB Board.

YOUR 2022-2024 RPEC CHAPTER 46 OFFICERS

Judith Frey	President	freybroughton@aol.com
Marianne Wilkins	Vice Pres.	marianne@msn.com
(Open)	Secretary	
Dennis Montgomery	Treasurer	denmont@comcast.net
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Barbara Gelsleichter	Trustee	bgelsleichter@gmail.com
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Jan Hemingway	Trustee	hibiscus911@hotmail.com

You can see that we have **two open positions**: one Executive Board member and a Secretary. Until we are able to fill the **Secretary position**, we will look for a volunteer to take notes at each business meeting. Could you be the one to step forward and fill this position?

- Before the meeting you will receive an agenda and notes in WORD to base the minutes on.
- The minutes do not have to be complex.
- The Secretary could coordinate other note takers to share the task.
- There are only 8 meetings a year for which notes need to be taken. (Get together 4 people and each would only have to take notes twice!)

Board Members, along with Officers are responsible for making decisions on behalf of the membership between meetings. They may be polled by email, phone, or in special meetings. If you have questions or are interested, contact President Frey at freybroughton@aol.com.

STEPS TO A PERMANENT RPEC PERS 1 COLA

According to a recent *Wall Street Journal* article, based on Department of Labor of Statistics information, inflation rose to 9.1% in June. Chicken is up 19%, Eggs up 33%, Rice is up 12% Luncheon meat is up 18%, Soups are up 16%, Apples up 6% and Margarine up 35%. Gasoline was up as much as 61%, but prices began to come down a bit in July.

So remember to thank your Senator and Representatives, if you have not already, for the temporary one-year 3% capped COLA for PERS 1 Retirees. Use this inflation information to ask for their support for a permanent, consistent, and substantial COLA for PERS 1 Retirees in the next legislative session.

Although we don't have the RPEC official strategy directions yet, this is one more opportunity to remind your legislators we are out here and we vote. Get the contact information for your legislators by entering your address at <https://app.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/>

Click on the Legislator's name and create your message.

WHAT I'VE BEEN READING



When the rain finally stopped, I thought about taking some nature walks, so I pulled down my copy of Sue Muller Hacking's *Take a Walk, 110 Walks within 30 minutes of Seattle and the Greater Puget Sound 4th ed.* Grouped by geographical area, each listing has a map, ratings on steepness, other users, whether dogs are allowed, what trails it connects to, amenities, and disabled access. These are walks, not hikes. There is a clear description of how to get there, where to park, and what you might expect to see. I rediscovered some old favorites and have tried some new experiences. Almost 30 of the walks are here on the Eastside. Happy forest bathing!

What have you been reading? Let President Frey know at freybroughton@aol.com so we can feature it in an upcoming newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP

In July, Chapter 46 added 9 new members: **Mark Adams, Gemita Delay, Danny Dudder, Gregory Hugher, Thiet Le, Karen Olguin, James Peterson, Neva Sullivan and Linda Ware.** Welcome! We look forward to meeting you at upcoming meetings.

Do you know someone recently retired from a state, city, or county position? Tell them about RPEC. Bring them to a meeting. If it is at a restaurant meeting, we'll buy them lunch. The most active new members in our chapter seem to be those recruited directly by members.

INTERESTED IN FEDERAL AND LOCAL ISSUES?

These statewide Zoom meetings with the new **Executive Director Laurie Weidner** and **Lobbyist Emily Murphy** give us information on strategies on federal and local issues. Now that the Legislature has adjourned, the Legislative Update has switched back to monthly meetings over Zoom when the legislature is not in session. Check the date of the next one on the RPECWA.org website. There is a permanent link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89045365250?pwd=cHYvbU80d08xTXRLTmpOZGF1VW53QT09>

Meeting ID: 320298

We also often hear of **District 9 events, candidate interviews, local political gatherings, or groups discussing issues** too late to include in the newsletter. If you would like to be kept up to date on these events, please let President Frey know.

UPCOMING CHAPTER 46 MEETINGS

Our September meeting will be on September 21st at noon at the Family Pancake House in Redmond. We are working to get a legislator who can discuss our legislative priorities.

Put the dates for the balance of 2022 on your calendar: **October 19th, November 16th, and December 14th.** *At the time of this writing, we plan for these to hold in-person meetings, but given the unpredictability of the COVID-19 virus, we may have to return to Zoom meetings.* Watch for updates in the monthly newsletter.

DO WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?

Members with email addresses on file received the slides from the April speaker on Fraud and Identity Theft and updates on RPEC-endorsed state primary candidates. If you don't already receive email reminders for each meeting, or receive follow-ups, send an email with your name to our Vice-President Marianne Wilkins at marianne@msn.com

RPEC FUTURE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTIONS

Please read RPEC Executive Director Laurie Weidner's Report on the next page to see what's up on the federal and state levels. You can always get an update on the RPECWA website www.rpecwa.org.

Executive Director's Report

Our big news coming out of last month was our astonishing victory at the June 30th virtual meeting of the Public Employees' Benefits Board (PEBB).

UMP Classic Medicare option still available

I am deeply proud of the work we accomplished together to stop the PEBB's vote on the resolution to eliminate the UMP Classic Medicare plan on January 1, 2024. This policy decision would have eliminated this health care plan of choice for more than 53,000 retirees across the state. It also would have forced retirees, who are current UMP Classic Medicare subscribers, to largely choose from among Medicare Advantage plans, some of which have arduous preauthorization features that hinder or restrict access to medically necessary care.

RPEC led the statewide opposition effort, gathered the coalition partners, and orchestrated an intense and aggressive campaign to stop the vote and hold the agency accountable for a rigorous public engagement process to inform future medical plan choices. We were successful because of your quick action and that of our coalition partners. Thank you for sending emails, on short notice, to the Health Care Authority (HCA) and PEBB. And, for emailing and calling your state representatives to apply pressure on PEBB to preserve the UMP Classic Medicare plan option. RPEC chapter leaders and district representatives called and emailed members to ensure full engagement. As a result of our collective work and that of our coalition partners, more than 300 retirees attended the June 30th PEBB meeting to protest. We triumphed! The resolution was taken completely off the docket! And, it was replaced with another resolution, offered by the AFSCME Council 28 board member, which added public accountability for PEBB to work with us on a rigorous, public engagement process to inform the development of healthcare policies for retirees.

There are far too many RPEC members and leaders to thank individually. That said, I do want to give special thanks to Elyette Weinstein, who serves as RPEC's representative on PEBB. We thank her for her leadership and expertise. Elyette alerted me and the Executive Board that this harmful policy would be on the agenda at the June 9th meeting. Her swift action enabled us to strategize and implement an extraordinary engagement effort.

We accomplished a great deal together in the span of only 2 ½ weeks! Our efforts were featured on the front page, below the masthead and "above the fold," in the July 7th print edition of the *Olympian* and its sister newspapers statewide. The article is available at the end of my monthly Membership Letter. It is also available on the Council website at www.rpecwa.org.

Our work with PEBB is just beginning. Under RPEC's continued leadership, the coalition will be meeting with the PEBB director on July 22 to discuss a public engagement model designed to engage RPEC members and other Medicare-eligible retirees in a dialogue, about their healthcare needs, their concerns about privatized for-profit medical plans, and the features they appreciate most in the UMP Classic Medicare plan. From a policy standpoint, our focus in working with PEBB, which has been identified as a top legislative priority by the Legislative Committee, aims to ensure the UMP Classic Medicare option is retained and PEBB explores expanding access to government self-insured medical plan options.

To date, our coalition includes the Washington State Alliance for Retired Americans, Healthcare Is A Human Right, Washington Education Association-Retired, Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action, Social Security Works Washington, the American

Federation of Teachers Washington, the Washington Federation of State Employees (AFSCME Council 28), and the Washington State Senior Citizen's Lobby.

Free annual RPEC membership

Last month, RPEC kicked off the Recruit 2, Get Your Dues, a member-to-member recruitment campaign. For every two new members you recruit, you will receive a check for \$84! To get credit, your name must appear in the "Recruited by" field on the new members' membership applications. Associate members do not count until they become full dues-paying members. Checks will only be issued to current members in good standing. If you recruit just two new members, your annual membership in RPEC will be free for a year! The chapter that recruits the most new members per capita, and the top-performing member-to-member recruiters will be highlighted in the Executive Director's Monthly Letter and the quarterly newsletter. How many new members can you and your chapter recruit to join RPEC?

Convention update

Just a quick reminder that all amendments and resolutions for our Convention in September are due to the Council Office on or before August 12th. Please direct them to Derek VanSpoor.

Delegates and leaders will receive more details about the Convention and COVID safety protocols in a few weeks.

PAC endorsements

The PAC has finalized the list of endorsements for candidates running for state office. The PAC also finalized the list of candidates who will receive PAC funding. The list of endorsed candidates will be published in the summer edition of the Membership Newsletter, which will be mailed in a few weeks to all members. The endorsement and contribution lists have been informed by the endorsements made by WSLC and AFSCME Council 28, candidate questionnaires, candidate interviews, RPEC's relationship with incumbents, and insights from RPEC's lobbyist.

At this juncture in the election cycle, our PAC chairperson and Executive Committee are in the process of interviewing all three candidates for Secretary of State to identify an endorsement(s). Moreover, our chapters are busy interviewing candidates for local offices. Some have finalized their endorsement lists and have identified the candidates who will receive campaign contributions.

Finally, as candidates sprint toward and prepare for success in the primary elections taking place on August 2, this is the ideal time to get involved in the campaigns of those who have been endorsed by RPEC and your local chapters. Volunteering is a great way to introduce those running for office for the first time to RPEC and our legislative priorities.

PAC fund-raiser fast approaching

In addition to your generous cash and pension-deduction contributions to the PAC, RPEC will host a special fund-raising event at Convention, September 27-29. Chapters and individual members are encouraged to donate items, from original artwork and one-of-a-kind items to excursions, experiences, and gift baskets. All proceeds will be directed to the PAC for campaign contributions to endorsed state and federal candidates. Do you have an item that you wish to donate to raise funds for the PAC? Reach out to your chapter president with details. Every chapter is responsible for transporting their donated items to our in-person Convention, which will held in Wenatchee.

Monthly Leadership Calls begin July 22

Council staff will be leading monthly Leadership Calls for all chapter leaders and anyone interested in learning more about chapter leadership. The schedule of topics for the monthly Leadership Calls is available on the Council website at www.rpecwa.org. The summer Leadership Calls will be held on July 22 and August 19.

WSARA update

The Washington State Alliance for Retired Americans (WSARA) is working in collaboration with Senator Patty Murray's congressional re-election campaign to create Seniors for Patty Murray, a campaigning unit dedicated to educating and engaging retirees. Volunteers are needed to join this effort to help with message development for campaign materials, coordinating and staffing campaign events, phone banking and more. The effort is just getting underway and there are many opportunities available. If you are interested in getting involved, contact Jackie Boschok, president of WSARA, via email at wsarapresident@hotmail.com. Please reach out to Jackie by July 17, if possible, to express your interest.

All RPEC members are invited to participate in two free virtual conferences taking place this month. Both will have exceptional programs on topics of interest to RPEC members. The Alliance for Retired Americans (ARA), Western Division, will hold its annual conference on Tuesday, July 19. Register here for free: [Regional Meeting Registration](#). ARA's National Conference will be held July 27 and 28. Register here for free: [National Meeting Registration](#)

Nominees sought for Norm Schut Award

Please send in your nominations for the Norm Schut Award. The award is given to a member in good standing who has provided exceptional service to RPEC. Nominations are due in writing to the Council Office no later than August 5. The awardee will be chosen by secret ballot by the Executive Board at the August 24 meeting. If you have questions, please call the Council Office.

Important Dates

Visit the RPEC website at www.rpecwa.org for a full calendar of Council and chapter events and meetings. All meetings noted are virtual via Zoom except Convention, which will be held in person in Wenatchee in September.

August 3: Finance Committee Meeting

August 3: Monthly Legislative Update Call

August 5: Deadline for the submission of Norm Schut Award nominees

August 13: Resolution/amendment submittal deadline for Convention

August 19: Monthly Leadership Call (chapter leaders and all those interested)

August 24: Executive Board Meeting

August 26: Legislative Committee Meeting

Sept 27-29: RPEC Convention (in-person, Wenatchee)

Nov 14: Executive Board Meeting

Best,
Laurie