



P.O. Box 1974
Springfield, IL 62705-1974
217-634-4317



Current News of Special Interest to State Retirees

RSEA Website: www.RSEA4U.org

Legislative e-mail: RSEAleg@aol.com

RSEA email: Retire@RSEA4U.org

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Editor, Marcia Hoos

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Sister Cities Association of Springfield

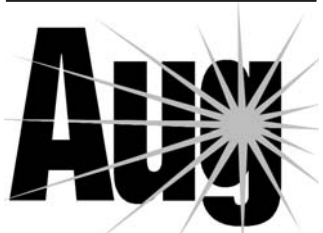
Our August speaker will be Carol Zerkle, a representative of the Sister Cities Association of Springfield, a group of volunteers who work to bring about closer relationships between Springfield and the city of Ashikaga, Japan. The group promotes such activities as student exchange programs under which our students go to Japan to study for specified periods of time.

Carol and her husband, Jim, an attorney and businessman have been married for thirty years. They have three sons and are deeply involved in the community life of Springfield. Carol's activities have generally had educational themes: school PTO's, district curriculum and planning committees, principal search committees, the Springfield Public Library Long-Range Planning Committee, The Springfield Children's Museum, The 1997 Presidents' Summit for America's Future, Springfield's Promise, the Dana-Thomas House Foundation, and The Sister Cities Association of Springfield. For several years she has lectured about the Gettysburg Address at high school levels in Ashikaga, Japan.

She shares a relationship with us in that she is a former state employee, having served as a Governor's Fellow during Jim Thompson's first summer as Governor. She was assigned to the now defunct Department of Registration and Education.

We look forward to Carol's presentation at our August meeting.

- Don Grammer, *Publicity & Education*



THIS MONTH

Wednesday, August 26, 2009
1:30 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran Church
Family Life Center
2477 W. Washington St.
Springfield, Illinois

"Sister Cities Assn. of Springfield"

Carol Zerkle, Speaker

COMING ATTRACTIONS

September 30, 2009
Annual Legislative Update

October 28, 2009
"Deployment to Iraq"
Speaker: Jim Watson
State Representative

November = No Meeting

December 4, 2009
Holiday Party



I have talked to a number of people, retirees, who are justifiably concerned about what might happen to their health care benefits, especially after the cuts proposed by Governor Quinn included a \$600 million cut in health care costs. Part of that cut was in Medicare, but the rest was for cuts in health benefits for state workers, and retirees. In addition, state workers, as well as retirees, are almost certain to see delays in payments for their health care bills.

So, where, and how, will health care benefits be cut? That is the question that seems to have no answer. No one, in or out of state government, seems to be able to furnish the details, if, indeed, there are any firm answers. No one seems sure of how the \$600 million dollar figure was determined, or was the \$600 million a ball park figure, to be studied, and adjusted, at a later date?

The problem is, it is almost impossible to oppose, or support, a program that has no specific proposals. In the past, we always had a bill, specific language, specific amounts, something that could be addressed by legislative action. But, in passing

an unbalanced budget, a budget well above anticipated revenues, the legislature left it up to the governor to take whatever actions, whatever cuts, he deemed necessary to bring the budget into balance.

In addition to cutting health care costs, Governor Quinn has proposed reducing the prison population by closing prisons, and the early release of some inmates. There will be required furlough days for state employees, plus the lay-off of about 2500 employees. That, according to the governor's staff. The fact is, only the governor knows whether all, or some, or none, of these things will be implemented. Though everyone agrees that cuts must be made, many wonder if some of these cuts are simply a scare tactic to get what the governor really wants, an income tax increase.

Adding to the confusion, is that eight hundred pound gorilla, the proposed national health care system. At this point, no one knows how it will affect current health care programs, not only for state workers, and retirees, but all private employers. We can even see where the state might be reluctant to commit to changes in coverage, or

changes in premiums, when what comes out of Washington might totally change what the state could, or must do.

As retirees, as older citizens, we are concerned that cost cuts required under a national, or under a virtually socialized health care system, could lead to the rationing of some health care procedures for elderly patients. Under European style, government run health care systems, many surgical procedures, especially elective surgery, for people above a certain age are considered to be non cost effective, too expensive for a relatively short extension of a person's life.

Given the possibility of some sort of a national health care system, would our state health insurance pay for surgical procedure, if that procedure was denied by a national health insurance plan? Would we still have a choice of plans, as we have now, or would we be thrown into a national health care plan? The fact is, at this moment, we are pretty much at the mercy of Governor Quinn, and the Washington establishment.



RETIRED STATE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION ADDRESS CHANGE FORM AND APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

email address:
retire@RSEA4U.org
website:
www.RSEA4U.org

NAME _____
 First Middle initial Last

MAILING ADDRESS _____
 Street Address or PO Box # Apt # if applicable

_____ City State Zip Code

PHONE # () _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

Mark ALL Boxes that apply:

- Permanent Address Change Temporary Address Change for _____ months
- Current Member Renewal (Annual Payees Only)
- New Member I am a: Retiree Spouse/Survivor *Current Employee of _____ (Agency)
- My Check for \$ _____ is enclosed for January through December, _____ (Annual dues are \$9.00 per year.)
year(s)
- I hereby authorize the State Employees Retirement System of Illinois (SERS) to deduct from my pension check the amount as certified by the RSEA of Illinois for my dues, and to remit said amount to the RSEA of Illinois. I also authorize SERS to provide change of address information to RSEA, if requested. (Currently, the deduction is 75 cents per month.)

Signature: _____ SS# _____ Date _____

Mail to: RETIRED STATE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION P.O. BOX 1974 SPRINGFIELD, IL 62705-1974

Current employees must obtain, complete and submit a Payroll Deduction Authorization (for 38 cents per pay period) to their payroll department.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

NEW MEMBERS

WELCOME to RSEA, and thank you for becoming a member.

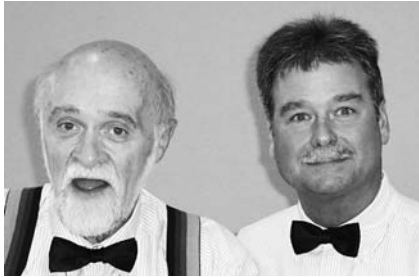
FINAL FAREWELL TO OUR DEPARTED MEMBERS

The Board members would like to extend our sympathy to the families and friends of the following members. If you are a surviving spouse of one of these members, please remember that as such you yourself are eligible for membership. There is a membership application in this publication that you may use to join. We would be happy to have you continue showing support of our organization.

Howard Copeland, New Berlin
Darline Fehr, Lawrenceburg TN
Eunice Hackbarth, Galt
Lulu Hoffman, Tremont
Velma Hurst, Peoria
Vincent Leyden, Wheaton

James Milkoski, Springfield
Merlyn Niedens, Okawville
Albert Seper, Orland Park
Dorthella Smith, Mattoon
James Whalen, Waverly

MUSIC, MUSIC, MUSIC



During our July meeting a full house of retirees was wonderfully entertained by Ken Bradbury and David Zink. They presented a lively program of piano duets-played

on the same piano. Their playing was lively and fun. Since most of their selections were played in a very upbeat format it seemed at times that they just ran out of notes. Ken commented that he and David sometimes have trouble staying on their own half of the piano and I can believe it.

Ken presented a brief background on the origin of each song and made the program very entertaining. For example, did you know that "Sweet Georgia Brown" was written with either a Georgia Legislator or

a lady of the night in mind? Or that the "Alabama Jubilee" was originally written as a praise song?

Praise songs played to an upbeat included "Amazing Grace", "Victory in Jesus" and "Just a closer walk with Thee". Other selections included "The Robert E. Lee," "The Tennessee Waltz", "The Lichtenstein Polka", "Darktown Strutter's Ball " and "Sentimental Journey". Ken and David's version of "God Bless America" brought a great response from the audience.

It was a very entertaining program and all of the songs were beautifully done. I don't believe anyone in the audience was ready for the program to come to an end. Suggestions that we see if we can get these guys on next year's program has been taken under consideration.

- Don Grammer
Publicity & Education

HOLIDAY PARTY

December 4, 2009 - Northfield Inn - Springfield, Illinois - This is the place to be.

The MENU is set, the PRIZES bought, the DJ booked, ENTERTAINMENT, VFW COLOR GUARD is ready, NOW we just need YOU to come.

Set this date aside and plan on being there. More information in next month's REPORTER.

- MARCIA

FROM THE PREZ...

I have numerous topics to discuss in this article. A safe topic is always the weather. As all citizens of Illinois know, if you wait long enough, the weather will change. I will be the first to admit I was wrong about hot weather in July. In my last article I had mentioned that no relief was in sight for the record hot weather in June. For July, the weatherman says the highs for July have not been this low since 1891. The long range forecast is for this weather pattern to continue through mid August. Then we will have a return to more normal "hot" weather!

In case you did not know, Pat Espenschied, Membership & E-mail Coordinator, fell and broke her left arm in two places. She had to have surgery. Carol Matheson, Secretary to the Board, and Larry Wort, 1st Vice-President, volunteered to take over Pat's duties until she is able to resume her duties. I am sure Pat appreciates it. I would like to thank the executive board for stepping up to help out.

Don Grammer, our Publicity and Education person, participated in the election to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the State

Retirement System. Don was not successful. He thanks everyone for supporting and encouraging him.

Sylvia Schluter, Chicago Metro Chairperson, attended our executive board and membership meeting Wednesday July 29, 2009. She brought two members from the Chicago Metro Chapter with her, Jackie Humphreys and Herb Phillips. The three of them rode Amtrak from Chicago to Springfield. They left Chicago at 7:00 a.m. and arrived in Springfield at 10:15 a.m. The train was on time! They arrived at our board meeting a few minutes late. We were meeting at Cook-Witter located at 225 East Cook.

We all enjoyed lunch at Bernie and Betty's. We then proceeded to our membership meeting. One hundred twenty-two members enjoyed our program. Ken Bradbury and David Zink performed, playing many old and familiar tunes on the piano. The church was really jumping for forty minutes.

August 26th will find Carol Zerkle talking about the Sister Cities Association of Springfield. She will

be talking about San Pedro, Mexico and Ashikaga, Japan. Please come learn more about two wonderful cities!

It is time to watch for children getting on and off buses again. Also, more children in the crosswalks. I do not know about your city, but in Jacksonville, Il, the first day of school is August 18th. Please be on the lookout. Children are our most valuable resource.

Did you travel across Illinois this summer? If not, there is still time in September. Plan your trip and then find yourself in Springfield for our membership meeting. Our next meeting is August 26th. Our September meeting is the 30th. Our membership meeting is held at St. John's Lutheran Church, 2477 West Washington, Springfield, Il. Our meeting begins at 1:30 p.m. Afterwards, this is coffee, cookies, and conversation. I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

G. William Curry,
President RSEA

WE'VE GOT MAIL

Now that I have THE LETTER from SRS in my hand, I feel I can safely say "thank you" for the hundreds of hours you have spent on behalf of retired State employees and their survivors to get P.A. #095-1043 passed.

I am the widow of a retired employee of Dept. of Public Health, and the promised increase in my monthly check is considerable and is most appreciated.

We all owe you kudos, bows, and hearty applause for your tireless effort to get that law passed and signed. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Margaret Lindsley

I would like to praise the person or persons who are in charge of mailing the Reporter. I want them to know I am receiving the Reporter a lot sooner than I used to. It arrives within the first 2 weeks of the month and not within the last week of the month. It's a great improvement - good job.

Stephen Ciaglo





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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

CHICAGO METRO CHAPTER

Our next meeting is scheduled for Sept. 16 and our guest speaker will be a representative from the Social Security Administration. October and November subjects to be announced. In December we will, of course, be attending the world famous Holiday Luncheon in Springfield. In the meantime have a great summer, stay safe, and see you at our next meeting!

Sylvia Schluter, Chairperson

