



Retired
State
Employees
Association
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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Our speaker for next month will be State Representative Jim Watson (R-Jacksonville) who has represented the 97th District in the General Assembly since December of 2001. Representative Watson's diverse background includes teaching at both the high school and college level and 10 years of business experience. Jim is a veteran of the first Gulf War and also Operation Iraqi Freedom. He currently serves as a Staff Sergeant with the U.S. Marine Corp Reserves 3rd Civil Affairs Group. He recently returned from a deployment to Iraq as a member of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force's Governance Cell.

While in Iraq, Watson served as a Governance Chief and the Chief Liaison to the Anbar Provincial Council, assisting the Iraqi people during their transition to a representative form of government. To achieve this objective, Watson's unit focused on tribal engagement-working with the existing tribes in the region to form functioning governments incorporating local leaders.

His duties included working with city councils and the provincial leadership council, analyzing and revising provincial laws, synchronizing and coordinating local and provincial governments, and establishing tribal relations. Watson believes that governance is the key to victory, and states that the Iraqis are working hard to implement their own form of representative government.

In the General Assembly, Representative Watson has been a strong advocate for veteran's rights, serving as the Republican Spokesman for the Veteran's Affairs Committee. In addition to veteran's issues, Jim continues to focus on education issues, fiscal responsibility, and growing Illinois' job market. His other committee assignments have included Financial Institutions, Elementary and Secondary Education, Public Utilities, and State Government Administration.

Watson is the father of three children, Katie, Jacob and Lexi. He and his wife, Lisa, reside in Jacksonville.
- Don Grammer, *Publicity & Education*

THIS MONTH

Wednesday, June 24, 2009
1:30 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran Church
Family Life Center
2477 W. Washington St.
Springfield, Illinois

"Deployment to Iraq"

Speaker: Jim Watson
State Representative

COMING ATTRACTIONS

July 29, 2009
"Music, Music, Music"

Ken Bradbury and David Zink

August 26, 2009
"Sister City Assn. of Springfield"

Speaker: Carol Zerkle

December 4, 2009
Holiday Party





Since this article is written the day after the legislative session should have ended, and didn't, we have no concrete answers on the issues so important to retirees. At this moment, the income tax increase proposed by Governor Quinn, and a more modest, two year proposal, died with the end of the regular legislative session. Now, there will have to be an overtime session, where any proposals, any bills, will have to have a super majority in order to pass. In a more perfect world, in order to reach the necessary super majority, all sides would have to be open to compromise. But, as we all know, compromise is an elusive thing in our legislative chambers.

Again, at this moment, compromise on an income tax increase

seems to hinge on cutting costs in Medicaid, with recipients being placed in a form of managed care program, and the creation of a two-tiered pension system for future employees. Rather than rushing to condemn these proposals, and in the spirit of compromise, we have to look at the huge cost of the Medicare program, and ask if it is not reasonable that Medicare recipients should abide by some of the restrictions in coverage now imposed on state retirees.

And, while we certainly don't want to go back to the days when our state retirement system benefits were the lowest in the nation, we cannot help but point out that a two tiered system is not a radical new proposal. In fact, many current retirees

are now living with the results, good and bad, of a two tiered system. In 1998, the retirement formula was changed for all those retiring after January 1 of that year, but no provision was made for those who had retired prior to that date, under a much lower benefit formula.

And, finally, in an analysis of investment fee savings, and transition costs, of the potential consolidation of all pension systems into a fund called the Illinois Public Employees Retirement System, released by the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability, under the most optimistic conditions, the savings would be quite modest, and under less favorable conditions, virtually no savings at all. So much for another grandiose proposal.

THANK YOU MR. BUIE:

It is difficult to know how to even begin to express my thanks to you, and to all who had a part, for your seemingly endless efforts in getting the Social Security offset removed.

I lost my husband in 1999, and at the time, when my benefit choices were being explained, I was told that efforts were in progress to have the Social Security Offset removed. Ten years!

You, and all who have worked tirelessly, deserve more thanks and credit than words can express.

About all I can say is may God bless you, and everyone who took part for all the good you have accomplished.

Sincerely,
Charlene Wald, Bloomington, Illinois

ROBERT McKEMIE: THE MARCH OF THE PENGUINS



was a slide program of pictures made by Robert on his trip to Antarctica. The program was interesting and prompted several questions from the audience which Robert did a fine job of fielding. He also used the program to make a case for his belief that there is a real problem with global warming.

Robert pointed out that the penguins of Antarctica

At our May monthly meeting, we were privileged to see a presentation by Robert McKemie, a noted wildlife photographer. Robert presented a program, "The March of the Penguins". It

are not afraid of humans since there are no predators on that continent that pose any threat to them. He said it might be possible to eat one, but that someone would need to be pretty hungry to undertake it. They are magnificent and fascinating birds, but it must take a truly dedicated individual to endure the hardships of extreme temperatures and rough seas in order to photograph them.



- Don Grammer, *Publicity & Education*



FROM THE PREZ...

This time last year I was planning a trip to the British Isles. What a great time! It would be great if such a trip was presently in the planning stage. However, there is no trip this year. Maybe next year.

This summer my traveling will be limited to the state of Illinois. As you all know, you can drive all day and never leave the borders of Illinois. I will be traveling in four directions this year visiting relatives and friends. To the south I will be visiting Mt. Vernon and Red Bud. In east central Illinois I will be visiting Greenup. In north-west Illinois I will be visiting Cambridge. To the west, I will be going to Quincy to visit my roommate from college. If time permits and the price of gasoline stays reasonable, I will venture to Lancaster, Missouri.

To our members located through-

out Illinois, think about a trip to central Illinois. All the parks and historical sites are open. Do not let the economic slowdown keep you from seeing everything Illinois has to offer. It is not necessary to travel overseas to have a great trip!

I hope to complete all the above trips during June and July. When I complete these trips, I will then give consideration in August to a trip to Great Falls, Montana. I have a high school classmate living there. I have not seen her since our high school senior class trip. Six years ago, she invited me to visit. She said she and her husband have plenty of room. Maybe I will go if I can find another classmate to go with me.

By the time you read this, July 4th will be rapidly approaching.

Please take care and turn on your headlights, so the other driver can see you. You may know what you are going to do, but you never know what the other driver is going to do. Please drive defensively!

I hope you have a great summer! Remember to plan your trip to central Illinois around our membership meeting. We always meet the last Wednesday of the month. Our next meeting is Wednesday June 24, 2009 at St. John's Lutheran Church, 2477 West Washington, Springfield, Il. Our meeting begins at 1:30 p.m. Afterwards, there is coffee, cookies, and conversation. I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

- G. William Curry
President, RSEA

OPINION

This article is a new endeavor for me. This is an opinion article. I hope everyone takes the time to read this article and to give it due consideration.

Don Grammer, our newest RSEA Executive Board member, is seeking your support. He is on the ballot for the Board of Trustees of the State Retirement System. His election will ensure that RSEA has a voice on the Board. Don has been a long time RSEA member and just recently took over the Publicity and Education position on the RSEA Executive Board. You may have read some of his articles in THE REPORTER.

Don retired in October 1991 as a CE VI and was District Engineer of Maintenance in the Carbondale Office of IDOT. For the last five years Don has been the Pastor of the First Baptist Church in Herrin, Illinois.

The RSEA Executive Board supports Don Grammer for the Board of Trustees of the State Retirement System. Won't you join us in support of Don Grammer? You should receive a ballot sometime in June. Thank-you for taking time to vote.

G. William Curry,
President, RSEA



On a personal note:

Thanks for all your help in at least getting my name on the ballot to run for a seat on the State Retirement System Board. I mentioned at the April meeting that I needed signatures in order to make a run for election and you all came through. Just getting on the ballot seems to me to indicate the influence we can have when we stick together.

- Don Grammer
Publicity & Education



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CHICAGO METRO CHAPTER

Hello to Chicago Metro RSEA members! If you missed our May meeting you probably missed finding out if you had 'lost' money that languished in a savings account or safety deposit box and you were not aware. Well, six of our attendees were so lucky and were glad they showed up. No meeting is planned for June or August. A road trip to Springfield to attend their July meeting is in the works. SO, if you would like to join us, give me a call ASAP.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Sept 16 and our guest speaker will be a representative from the Social Security Administration. Oct & Nov subjects TBA. In Dec 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, Chair

