



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



Current News of Special Interest to State Retirees

RSEA Website: [www.RSEA4U.org](http://www.RSEA4U.org)

Legislative e-mail: [RSEAleg@aol.com](mailto:RSEAleg@aol.com)

RSEA email: [Retire@RSEA4U.org](mailto:Retire@RSEA4U.org)

Vol. XXXI No. 10

October 2008 Editor, Marcia Hoos

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*Welcome*

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## LIKE TO WHINE ABOUT YOUR AILMENTS? SOME PEOPLE GET PAID TO DO IT! DETAILS TO BE TOLD AT OCTOBER MEETING

We're all familiar with the role of placebos in the testing of drugs, but how many of us knew that human beings can also serve as placebos in medical training?

At Southern Illinois University School of Medicine at Springfield, their use is common practice--only there, they're known as "Standardized Patients." You may be surprised that you know some of them. One might be seated next to you in church, or at an RSEA meeting.

Mary Aiello, director of the Standardized Patient Program at SIU, will tell us about the little-known training program at our meeting in Springfield on October 29.

Although it's not widely known in Springfield, the SPP is highly regarded in the medical field, and has served as a model for other medical schools. Introduced into the curriculum in the late 1970s, the program was expanded in the SP Project at the National

Board of Medical Examiners and for the Macy Consortia Project in the early '90s.

Standardized Patients (SPs) are defined roughly as "Simulated patients carefully trained to accurately and consistently portray the history, physical findings, personality, emotions, and behavior of an actual patient at a particular point in the patient's illness."

Dr. Howard Burrows of the SIU staff is credited with pioneering the concept as a way to develop the medical student's interpersonal skills and improve doctor-patient relationships.

Ms. Aiello will explain how the SPs are recruited and trained, and how the medical students react to the pseudo-patients. Although some may initially be resistant to the concept, most agree that the program has been extremely helpful to them in the development of their communication skills, Aiello says.

*Continued on p. 5*

### ANNUAL DUES REMINDER FOR DECEMBER 2008

If the address label on this mailing says DEC 2008 above your name, your \$9.00 annual payment is due by the end of December. A separate bill will not be sent to you, so please use the "Address Change Form and Application for Membership" (above) to send in your renewal as soon as possible!

If your label says PAY\_DED7, PAY\_DED9, or has a different year shown, DO NOT send a check - your dues are already being taken out of your pension check each month.

If you have any questions, call the phone number shown at the top of page one.

*- Pat Espenschied, Membership Chair*

### THIS MONTH

Wednesday, October 29, 2008, 1:30 p.m.  
St. John's Lutheran Church Family Life Center  
2477 W. Washington St., Springfield, Illinois



**SIU School of Medicine**  
Mary Aiello

### COMING ATTRACTIONS

November - No Meeting

Friday, December 5, 2008  
Annual Holiday Party  
Northfield Inn, Springfield, IL  
11:00 to 3:00





I'm sure that most of you are aware that there will be a proposal on the November ballot to call a state constitutional convention. Certainly, we are living in a climate of uncertainty, and sometimes it seems that any change would have to be a change for the better. But, remember, there are good changes, and there are bad changes. A constitutional convention could not only be expensive, between fifty and eighty million dollars, but worse, it could open up a can of worms, the results of which no one can predict.

Everyone, of course has their own priorities, their wish list, or an ax to grind. In the case of state employees, and state retirees, we could expect proposals to drastically change not only the way our pensions are funded, but the way they are calculated. It is safe to say that any proposals in the pension area would not be to increase pensions. We all know that there are misconceptions out there that state employees retire with pensions and benefits that are far above the private sector, which, of course, is not true, especially when compared to other large employers such as the auto industry, or many utilities. But, this miscon-

ception could well prompt the members of the constitutional convention to propose reducing funding for the pension system, to reduce pension benefits, or to throw out the whole pension system, as we know it.

Sure, any proposals crafted by the constitutional convention would have to be approved by the voters, but in this environment of change, who knows what the voters might approve? And sure, there are attractive issues out there, like term limitations, the ability to recall elected officials, and even to address the unpopular, and often unfair, property tax. But, do we also want the convention to address our pension system? The fact is, we don't have to have a constitutional convention to address these issues. Today, our legislators have the ability to propose changes to the constitution, and to place those proposals before the voters. Certainly, there are reasonable changes that could be proposed, but to open up an anything goes can of worms could end up with possibly tragic, and unintended, results.

Are current retirees in danger of having their pensions, or their benefits

reduced? In the case of pensions, probably not, but health benefits could be a target. And, when I say that current pensions would probably not be affected, there is that word probably. There are those who argue that current pensions are protected by state and federal statutes, but the state statutes could be nullified by voter approved changes in the constitution. Now, picture this. The constitutional convention votes, and voters approve, a provision to reduce not only future pensions, but current ones as well. Certainly, while this would immediately be challenged in the courts, we all know that such cases often wind through the court system for years. And, in the meantime, the courts might decide to let the pension reductions stand, pending a final resolution.

I should also point out that these are editorial comments, not the position of RSEA. As an organization, we do not endorse candidates, nor do we take official positions on issues, but we do feel obligated to alert our readers when there are issues out there, such as this one, that could adversely affect current, and future, retirees.

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## **JOB OPENING ANNOUNCED: GREAT BENEFITS ATTACHED!**

Do you have writing skills? Are you comfortable using a microphone? Do you have creative ideas?

If so, do we have a job opportunity for you!

After nearly 10 years as RSEA's chairman of Publicity and Education, I'm resigning as of the first of the year. I've enjoyed the assignment immensely, but my deteriorating close vision makes it nearly impossible for me to decipher my own notes or to see what I'm writing.

The pay? Same as all other positions on the RSEA board: zilch. This is an all-volunteer organization, remember?

But the rewards are boundless, nevertheless. There's the thrill of seeing your name in print. There's the satisfaction of writing in your own style, expressing yourself in your own words, without fear of censorship, partisan or otherwise.

There's the pleasure of speaking freely from the podium, making people laugh with you or inspiring them to think deeply about some serious topic.

And above all, there's the pride you feel when your fellow RSEA members compliment you on something you've written or said, or commend you for a program you've arranged.

Other retired public information officers can probably relate to the intangibles, especially if, like me, they spent nearly 40 years as a ghost writer or writer-editor without a byline. I can't help but admit I get a real rush out of compliments. Beats a paycheck any day! (Well, nearly.)

Another perk of the job is membership on the RSEA board, and the opportunity to meet monthly with a congenial group of resourceful people who share a common interest in advancing our organization and its goals.

Getting speakers for our monthly meetings is the main task, of course, but it's not as hard to do as people think it is. There are loads of people looking for an audience. The trick is finding the ones with the widest appeal, or the one with the timeliest topic. Our fellow members frequently offer suggestions. Our meetings are planned through January, 2009, so the new person's duties won't really begin until February.

Interested? Please contact President Bill Curry, ASAP, at 217/243-4830 or email him at [gwcurry3@verizon.net](mailto:gwcurry3@verizon.net).

It's been a great ride, and I really hate jumping off the train while it's on a roll. I urge you to climb aboard and join a great gang on a fun trip.

- Muriel Runyen



RETIRE STATE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
ADDRESS CHANGE FORM AND APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

NAME: First, Middle initial, Last
MAILING ADDRESS: Street Address or PO Box #, Apt # if applicable
City, State, Zip Code
PHONE #, E-MAIL ADDRESS

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

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
My Check for \$ \_\_\_ is enclosed for January through December, \_\_\_ (Annual dues are \$9.00 per year.)
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.

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

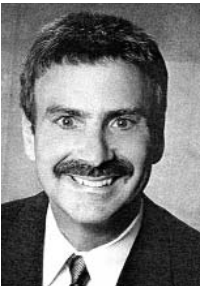
WELCOME NEW MEMBERS - - SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER

- Mary Jane Anderson, Ottawa IL; Barbara L Armstrong, Chicago IL; Patricia Baldwin, Chicago IL; Meena Ballal, Darien IL; Dianne M Barghouti, Springfield IL; R J Barth, Winona MN; Lalita Batra, Schaumburg IL; Louis R Benton, Kenosha WI; Isham Betty, Lincoln IL; Kathleen A Bogie, Evanston IL; Diana L Brennan, Springfield IL; Sarah A Carmody, Chicago IL; Terri S Deal, Sarasota FL; John R DeLaLeurs, Orland Hills IL; William R Donels, Springfield IL; Dianna Durham-McLoud, Hazel Crest IL; Rhoynette M Ellison, Park Forest IL; Karen G Fishel, Taylorville IL; Marion Grossett, Chicago IL; Bernard Hannon, Chicago IL; Phyllis D Harrison, Dawson IL; Delbert D Haschemeyer, Athens IL; Carol E Hey, Springfield IL; Addie A Hudson, Chicago IL; Kaye F Jackson, Olympia Fields IL; Linda S Jones, Taylorville IL; Robert L Lloyd, New Berlin IL; Elizabeth R Maley, Sherman IL; Everett M Metzler, Sterling IL; Andrea Moore, Libertyville IL; Merry C Moss, Springfield IL; John R Newman, Springfield IL; Susan M Nowak, Chicago IL; Jacklyn Payne, Chicago IL; Charles E Ridgeway, Sr., Broadwell IL; Steven G Rivenson, Mount Prospect IL; Marta H Sayeed, Lincolnwood IL; Edward P Schenk, Elk Grove Village IL; Deborah L Schnell, Taylorville IL; Douglas L Schnell, Taylorville IL; Adeline C Schwabe, Carpentersville IL; Suzanne A Shaner, Chatham IL; Ellen J Squires, Springfield IL; Robert L Stortzum, Sullivan IL; Ethel H Thom, Springfield IL; Ronald J Tucker, Springfield IL; Carmen Velazquez, Berwyn IL; Ann Wells, Bloomington IL; Heidi White, Chicago IL; Kenneth F White, Chicago IL; Kathleen A Williams, Waltonville IL; Ruth Wiseman, Sullivan IL; Carol Young, Pontiac IL; Bob T Bastas, Springfield IL; Marlyn R Benning, Litchfield IL; Benjamin J Bonales, Lindenhurst IL; Renita L Bonner, Chicago IL; John R Carlson, Chicago IL; D W Clark, San Diego CA; Mildred C Crowley, Rolling Meadows IL; Robert A Dombro, Huntley IL; Betty J Duggan, Homewood IL; Lowell G Hardesty, Steeleville IL; William R Lankford, Palm Coast FL; Tarea K Lee, Springfield IL; Carla A Marvel, Olney IL; Vicki S Mattingley, Oregon IL; Ray Miller, Zion IL; Jo Anne Nelson, North Henderson IL; Margaret E Scribner-Basak, Mokena IL; Melanie M Stonecipher, Dixon IL; Arhur C Strwmatt, Beach Park IL; Mary E Teague, Springfield IL; Bradley D Warren, West Frankfort IL; Darrell K White, Olney IL; Barbara J Wisham, Chicago IL

FINAL FAREWELL TO OUR DEPARTED MEMBERS

- William Banaszak, Oswego; James Cannon, Fallbrook CA; Kenneth Cercello, Joliet; Lee Dunavan, Centralia; Virginia Ellison, Springfield; Louise Houston, Springfield; Ellen Iden, Columbus OH; Norma Johnson, Murphysboro; Dorothy Koerber, Waterloo; Dave Lancaster, Manteno; Lucille Marlowe, Marco Island FL; Bonnie McGuire, Chicago; Robert McReynolds, Bethany; Herman Nelson, Rock Falls; Sally Newlan, Bloomington; George Nichols, Dixon; John Paska, Des Plaines; Sally Pitelka, Oak Park; John Richards, Springfield; Lonnie Sartore, Manhattan; Miles Turner, Chicago; Carrie Vescio, Niles; Barbara Whittington, Elkhartville; John Wittenbrink, Chester; - Pat Espenschied, Membership Chair

## BOMKE PREDICTS PASSAGE OF RSEA BILL -- AT LAST!



When Sen. Larry Bomke speaks, RSEA listens. As well they should, for Bomke, who represents the 50th district of Illinois, has long been known for his support of State employees and retirees and their rights.

Speaking before a packed house at our September meeting in Springfield, Bomke had some good news, for a change.

"I feel quite sure that the RSEA bill (SB1985) will make it this time," he ventured, somewhat cautiously.

The audience applauded, but with less enthusiasm than if he'd said the same thing a couple of sessions ago, before the actuaries got in the act and changed the formula a few times.

Bomke heaped high praise on RSEA's lobbyist, Randy Witter, for his dogged efforts in pursuing passage of the bill despite the many obstacles thrown in its path.

"It seems as though I've been working on this bill ever since I came into the Senate," the lawmaker mused, recalling how the original intent was simply to eliminate the Social Security offset which had been mistakenly imposed upon the surviving spouse's benefits. In its final (we hope) version, enactment of the legislation depends upon voluntary participation by 50% of the current employees, so getting it passed into law does not automatically provide restoration of the offset funds.

Reviewing the actions--and inaction--of the recent legislative session Bomke was less than charitable in his observations

about Governor Blagojevich.

He told of a recent study of the governor's itinerary purportedly done by a surveillance team who clocked his every move, which showed that over a period of 30 days, the governor had failed to appear in his office, although he did make a few appearances at campaign headquarters.

Bomke quickly shot down the governor's defense of his order to move IDOT's Traffic Safety Division from Springfield to southern Illinois. Initially, Bomke said, the governor insisted it would be a cost-saving move, but when this theory was disproved, the governor switched his defense to its being the purpose of economic development. This to was disparaged by pointing out that disrupting the lives of hundreds of families in order to improve the economy of one community at the expense of another was hardly logical. The obvious conclusion, Bomke said, was that it was strictly for political gain.

Asked to explain why, in a letter to the editor published in the STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER, Bomke had urged House Speaker Michael Madigan to begin impeachment proceedings against the governor, the legislator reminded the audience that by law, impeachment proceedings must begin in the House of Representatives. He had further told a political columnist that his actions in no way were meant to imply that he would vote for impeachment, if it were introduced. "Impeachment is not to be taken lightly," he cautioned, "It hasn't been done in Illinois in 150 years."

Obligingly taking questions from the audience, Bomke declined to take a stand on the forthcoming referendum on a constitutional convention ("Con-Con"). He urged his listeners to study the pros and cons of

the proposition carefully before going to the voting booth in November. He reminded them that it was the 1970 constitution which reduced the size of the House, thus effectively concentrating the power in the leadership, and warned that another Con-Con "could affect the pension benefits of many retirees."

Referring to a survey taken of central Illinois residents earlier this summer, Bomke recalled that 93% of the respondents had said "No" to the question, "In your opinion, is this state headed in the right direction?"

Bomke visibly shuddered as he spoke of employee layoffs and the effect of mandatory overtime in overcrowded, understaffed prisons, and added "I only hope something catastrophic doesn't happen in the Department of Corrections or in Children and Family Services."

Reviewing the recent budget crisis and the legislature's actions in restoring funds to critical services, Bomke added, to resounding applause. Bomke said, "I hope the Governor has the sense of decency to use the money restored to the budget to reopen closed facilities."

Surprisingly, the Springfield lawmaker admitted that there is one point on which he and Blagojevich are in agreement. "I agree with the governor completely, that we can't offer something without being able to fund it."

Now THAT'S what we call a lesson in economics!

- Muriel Runyen  
Publicity & Education



## ACKERMAN BREAKS OLYMPIC RECORD

Move over, Michael Phelps!

The Olympic athlete's record achievement of eight gold medals at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing was soundly defeated at the Senior Olympics in Springfield last month by RSEA Board Member Ray Ackerman.

Inspired by Phelps' accomplishment and determined to go him one better, Ackerman entered nine events and won first place in each one of them. He proudly wore all nine of them to the September meeting, the heavy gold discs dangling from bright blue ribbons around his neck.

Competing in the 90 - 94 age bracket, Ray surpassed all his competitors in: 3/8 oz. bait casting, 5/8 oz. bait casting, Miniature golf, 100 yard backstroke, 50 yard freestyle, 100 yard freestyle, 50 yard backstroke, discus, and shot put.

Ray admits he entered the shot put and discus throwing with some misgivings, since he last competed in them when he was in high school -- 73 years ago. But the most amazing feat of all was the fact that he competed at all. He was limping painfully, leaning on a cane, and was slated to undergo reconstructive surgery on his hip just a couple of weeks after the competition.

His fellow state retirees congratulated Ray, but we can't help wonder: How good is Michael Phelps at miniature golf?

- Muriel Runyen

# FROM THE PREZ...

High blue skies with fluffy clouds, cool mornings, warm afternoons, ghosts, witches, and trick or treaters. It must be October with Halloween approaching. This is my favorite time of the year. As a child in the 50's, I remember going trick or treating with my sister and all the kids in the neighborhood. We would gather at my house, and then walk one block to my grandmother's house. It was always the first stop. She used to make ginger bread men with blue icing for clothes.

When I was working for the Department of Human Services, I had a co-worker

that loved Halloween. It was her favorite holiday. We used to dress in costume and have our holiday luncheon on Halloween. It had many advantages. The caterer was never busy, we could always have the date, and there was no rushing around trying to get to the next holiday event. We could relax and enjoy the day.

Our Christmas Luncheon is approaching. I hope you take time out from your busy schedule and attend this year. It is always an enjoyable time and there is always something new. It is never

the same old Luncheon. Many members seem to agree. We have members come from out of state and all parts of Illinois. Please complete the form in the "Reporter" and order tickets.

Our next meeting will be Wednesday October 29, 2008 at St. John's Lutheran Church, 2477 West Washington Street, Springfield, Il. The meeting begins at 1:30 p.m. Afterwards, there is coffee, cookies, and conversation. I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

- Bill Curry

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## CHICAGO METRO CHAPTER

Chicago Metro RSEA is planning a meeting on October 22, 2008 at 1:00 PM  
Thompson Center 9th Floor

You can contact Sylvia Schluter at 1-773-275-1464 or email her at [sweetvyce@aol.com](mailto:sweetvyce@aol.com)

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## LIKE TO WHINE ABOUT YOUR AILMENTS? ....Cont'd from Page 1

As Director of the Standardized Patient Program and Coordinator of the Year 2 Curriculum, Ms. Aiello works with the Office of the Associate Dean for Education and Curriculum. Prior to assuming her present position, she was the clinical study coordinator for the Center for Epilepsy in the Department of Neurology.

She earned her bachelor's degree in biology from Western Illinois University and her master's, also in biology, from the University of Illinois/Springfield.

In addition to being informative, the October meeting may offer a special inducement to some of our members; a job opportunity. Yes, the "human placebos" are paid for their efforts--and Ms. Aiello says she's willing to do some recruiting.

So--if you have any acting skills and don't mind feigning illness, you might want to apply. The salary probably won't pay off the mortgage, but it might help fill up your gas tank.

Muriel Runyen  
Publicity & Education

## HOLIDAY PARTY A BONANZA FOR BARGAIN-HUNTERS

Looking for a bargain? How about joining your fellow state retirees at the annual RSEA holiday party on December 5.

Where else can you go for \$15 and get a full-course meal, tax and tip included, plus music entertainment and the opportunity to enter a drawing for a valuable prize? You don't even have to buy a ticket for the drawing; your lunch ticket enters you automatically,

And if you're one of the lucky ones whose name is drawn, what's the prize? That's where the "chance" comes in. You might win a free hamburger at a drive-in -- or you might win a TV set. "The Party Girls and a Guy" are still buying the loot, and won't divulge the whole list until the next issue of THE REPORTER. We do know there won't be another "flying cow," the mystery gift two years ago, but there could be something equally exotic.

The meal, or course, is no secret: sliced turkey with celery dressing or sliced sirloin topped with mushroom sauce, plus tossed salad, roasted red potatoes, green beans with onions and bacon and assorted cream pies.

The party is once again at the popular Northfield Inn, which is fully handicap-accessible and has ample free parking. Doors will open at 10:30 am, with a cash bar available, and luncheon will be served at 12 noon. Drawings and music will conclude by 3:00 pm.

For those wishing to stay overnight (we're expecting a contingent from Metro-Chicago, among others), rooms are available on site for \$69 plus tax per night. Call 217/523-7900 for reservations, specifying you are with the RSEA group.

A ticket order form is elsewhere in this issue. Send it with your check for \$15 per person, payable to RSEA, together with a stamped, self-addressed envelope, to Marcia Hoos, 1241 Urban Ave., Springfield, IL 62704, by November 30.

See you at the party!

- Muriel Runyen  
Publicity & Education



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State  
Employees  
Association

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*TICKET ORDER - RSEA ANNUAL  
CHRISTMAS PARTY  
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2008 - 11:00 A.M. TO 3:00 P.M.  
NORTH FIELD CENTER, SPRINGFIELD*



My/ our choice of entree is:

Enclosed is my check for \_\_\_\_\_ tickets

\_\_\_\_\_ Sliced Turkey

@\$15.00 each

\_\_\_\_\_ Sliced Sirloin

Total enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_



Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to RSEA. Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope and mail to:

Marcia Hoos - 1241 Urban Ave. Springfield, IL 62704 217/546-1404

DEADLINE FOR TICKET ORDERS: NOVEMBER 30

