

ENGINEERING RETIREES SOCIETY

Quarterly Meeting

March 6, 2014

The next meeting place is the Tukwila SPEEA hall

Come early! 12 p.m. noon (for a sandwich lunch, coffee and meeting friends.) This is a videoconference meeting tied in with members attending from SPEEA Everett.

(At SPEEA Tukwila, you may park across the street in the south part of the Bricklayers' union hall.)

Guest speaker

The speaker for our March 6 meeting is **Jared Adams**, an estate planning attorney and adjunct professor at the University of Washington. He will discuss some recent updates in federal and state laws regarding estate planning. Jared is an excellent speaker - you do not want to miss this!

Officer Elections

During the December meeting, the members voted for board members whose terms were over in the new year. The following were successful: **Dwight Rousu** for vice president, **Jim Gillan** for treasurer and **Dave Huntman** for steering board chair.

Spouses welcome

Please be reminded that under the rules for ERS, the spouses of members are also members and that a surviving spouse may continue as a member of the Society after the death of a partner who was a SPEEA-represented employee before retirement.

Boeing Gift Match

The method for obtaining Boeing Gift Match Funds for charitable contributions has changed. It is now done on the internet through the Boeing Total Access web site. The list of eligible organizations is also there.

ERS website

Don't forget our ERS Web site at:

ENGINEERINGRETIREES.ORG

Just click on "ENTER WEBSITE HERE." From there, you just choose what you want to see, such as 'NEWSLETTER,' and you will see the most up-to-date information. Also the NRLN website may be accessed from our site at www.NRLN.org to review longer informational articles than may be included in the newsletter. For instance, there is a very interesting NRLN article entitled "Insurers warn of Medicare premium rise" written in part by Bill Kadereit. It is too long for any newsletter, but can be accessed through their website www.nrln.org.

Elected officers are:

President	DAVE WATT 425-868-5603
Vice President	DWIGHT ROUSU
Secretary	JIM EWING
Treasurer	JIM GILLAN
Steering Board Chair	DAVE HUNTMAN 425-868-0961 davidhuntman@comcast.net
SPEEA Contact	Dawn Hanks dawnh@speea.org

The current appointed Committee Chairs, members and Reps are as follows:

ARA Liaison	Harvey Kriloff
Badges	Tom Mechler
Communications (website)	David Westman/Stan Lind
Finance	Stuart Buchan
Governing Doc.	Gene Blackman
Insurance	Dick Ferguson
Investments	Dave Watt/Ken Kuehnl
L&PA	Dwight Rousu/Dave Watt
Membership	John Neller
Nominations & Elections	OPEN (temporary - Dave Watts)
NRLN/ARA Liaison	Dave Watt
Pension	David Westman
Programs	Dave Watt
Refreshments	John Meeker/Dave Huntman
Service	Gary Palmer
Social	Dave Huntman
SPEEA Liaison	Dick Ferguson
Sunshine	Joan Johansen
Taxation	Rick Turney
Travel	Gary Palmer

Thanks to all the people who fill our committee chair positions.

The chair position for 'Nominating/Elections' is open and needs to be filled.

WE NEED YOUR HELP, Please Volunteer!

Call Dave Watt at 425-868-5603.

Thank you to **Gene Blackman** for taking the Governing Documents chair and Rick Terney for accepting the Taxation chair.

Governing Documents revision

A required update to the Bylaws was missed by the Governing Documents (temporary) chair when gathering necessary document updates. This revision was presented to the members at the December general meeting and approved as follows. The update essentially removed the need for fees in the dues structure.

REV H.1: REVISIONS TO THE BYLAWS PARA: 4.2

DELETE: Existing paragraph 4.2 entirely. Replace with:

"4.2 Dues and Duration

- 4.2.1 The dues shall be \$15 per year for individuals, couples or surviving spouse membership. There will be no dues for Honorary Life Membership. Dues for those joining in November or December shall be applied to the succeeding year.
- 4.2.2 Dues billing shall be sent out approximately by January 15 and shall be due within 45 days. A second billing, if required, shall be mailed in April.
- 4.2.3 Those members whose dues are not received within 60 days after mailing of the second billing shall be called to encourage payment. If, during the proposed contact from a board member, the delinquent person rejects further dues payment, then that person shall be dropped from continuing membership.
- 4.2.4 The dues schedule shall be reviewed at the November Steering Board meeting. If a new structure is required, it shall be approved, before application, by those members attending the December General meeting."

Investment Group Meetings

Hi All, Romaine and I will be spending the 3rd week of February in Mazatlan with friends and the 3rd & 4th weeks of March in Australia with our daughter Marie, Adam, and the kids Maxine and Eve.

Dwight Rousu and I attended the NRLN (National Retiree Legislative Network) annual meeting on Feb. 4, 5, & 6. The meeting opened at 2 p.m., Tuesday, with a review of the meeting objectives, an overview of 2013 legislative objectives, a review of the prescription drug white paper, and review of Feb. 5 & 6 lobbying plans.

Wednesday morning, we reviewed the NRLN 2013 legislative agenda and our grassroots network, income security, pension plan 'de-risking,' discussion on defined benefits pensions, and reviewed the information folder for distribution at our Capitol Hill appointments.

Tuesday afternoon and all day Wednesday were dedicated to lobbying. Some of the talking points in the handout folders are included elsewhere in this newsletter and on our ERS website at www.engineeringretirees.org. After the meeting, we will post a meeting report on our website.

SPEEA members will soon be voting on the latest Boeing contract offer which does have the language back in that ERS picketed on Sept. 26. The prime issue for retirees was the Boeing contract language deletion that said, for current retirees, Boeing could not eliminate early retiree health care insurance which covers retirees up to age 65 (prior to Medicare). Retiree Defined Benefit Pension is guaranteed by federal law except through bankruptcy. But, HEALTH CARE INSURANCE IS NOT GUARANTEED (this includes the supplement that Boeing pays for Medicare supplement insurance after age 64).

Now the question is what happens if Congress raises the Medicare starting age above 65. If SPEEA rejects the contract and goes out on a strike, I will be asking all of our ERS members to support the strike by volunteering in any way possible.

Dave Huntman, Dwight Rousu, and I attended the SPEEA and Boeing pre-retiree meetings, talked about ERS, and handed out an ERS information sheet. In exchange for their email information, we send them email copies of ERS newsletters and notices of ERS investment and quarterly meetings. Our intention is to recruit new members.

We all need to continue to support ERS/NRLN legislative agenda items such as Social Security and Medicare. Please make a commitment to respond to Action Alerts on our 'capwiz' network. If you are not receiving the Alerts, please go to www.nrln.org to sign up or update your information. Responding to the Action Alerts that address retiree issues with Congress is very easy. Based on zip codes, our senators and representative are automatically displayed. Revise the sample letter as little or as much as you wish, review changes, and send.

Check our ERS website www.engineeringretirees.org to review old newsletters, meeting dates and links of interest.

- Dave Watt, president

December quarterly meeting minutes

Dec. 5, 2013 quarterly meeting minutes

Dave Watt called the December meeting to order at 12:40 p.m. in the South Park IAM Hall.

Good of the Society: We had one new member, Tom McDavid, and one first-time attendee, Carl Larsen. We were told that SPEEA had made multiple errors in the paper copies of the December newsletter that were mailed to members.

Minutes: Jim Ewing read the minutes of the September 2013 quarterly meeting and the minutes were approved as read. The minutes correctly stated that one of our members had told us that Boeing employee health insurance and Boeing early-retiree health insurance would pay for a hepatitis C vaccination. However, there is not yet a vaccine for hepatitis C. Boeing insurance will only pay for a test for hepatitis C.

President's Report: He reported that we now have 677 members who have paid dues for 2013. Dave added that he and others have been speaking at pre-retirement meetings held at the Everett and Tukwila SPEEA halls in order to recruit those who are near retirement to become ERS members when they retire.

Vice President's Report: Reported that he had attended a Town Hall meeting at which mergers of formerly public hospitals and Catholic hospitals were discussed. Dwight also mentioned that Senators Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders have offered proposals to improve and enhance Social Security. Dwight said he had prepared a draft ERS budget for 2014 and had attended pre-retirement meetings in both Everett and Tukwila, with about 12 people signing up to receive our newsletter by e-mail. Dwight also said that he had attended meetings of the national and northwest SPEEA Legislative and Public Affairs (L&PA) committees.

Treasurer's Report: Reported that he had gotten the hang of being the Society's Treasurer and had devised a more efficient way of making deposits. Jim said that our cash flow was satisfactory, although our revenue was slightly less than it was in 2012.

Steering Board Chair's Report: Reported that he had attended a pre-retirement meeting in Everett and had spoken to about 40 people, twelve of whom had signed up to receive our newsletter by e-mail. He had put together our December newsletter but that printing errors had occurred. Dave urged us to become individual members of NRLN by using the form on page 8 of our December newsletter.

Harvey Kriloff urged the Society to join ARA as a club member for only \$50 per year.

Committee and Rep Reports: NRLN Liaison Dave Watt told us that he and Dwight Rousu would attend the annual NRLN conference in Washington, D.C., in February 2014. Investments Chair Dave Watt added that our next investment meeting would take place on Jan. 16, 2014, at the Tukwila SPEEA hall. Dave Watt announced that Gene Blackman had volunteered to be our Governing Documents Chair. (Thanks Gene!). Temporary Governing Documents Chair Dave Huntman told us that the board had voted for changes to Bylaws section 4.2 that would eliminate joining and rejoining fees. The members approved these changes to Bylaws section 4.2 almost but not quite unanimously. Communications Co-chair Dave Westman told us that he had posted our December newsletter on our website. Sunshine Co-chair Myrv Johansen told us that he and Joan had sent a sympathy card to Inez Boffey, the widow of Albert Boffey, who had recently passed away. Dave Watt told us that Rick Terney had volunteered to be our Taxation Chair. (Thanks Rick!)

Unfinished Business: Dave Huntman told us that no breakfast meetings for new retirees had been held in 2013 but that a breakfast meeting was being planned at two venues for February 2014.

New Business: We elected Dwight Rousu as Vice President, Jim Gillan as Treasurer and Dave Huntman as Steering Board Chair. All three candidates were unopposed and were elected unanimously.

Dwight Rousu presented his 2014 budget proposal and the proposal was approved without dissent.

The members voted to donate \$50 to each of five charities, for a total of \$250. The charities are the Millionaire Club Charity, Northwest Harvest, Meals on Wheels, Renton Food Bank, and Food Lifeline. Tom Mechler announced that 35 members attended the meeting. Dave Huntman conducted drawings for ten poinsettia plants, two hats, and two \$50 gift cards to Anthony's Restaurants.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for March 6, 2014.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Ewing, Secretary

Welcome

The newsletter has an area where the names of any new members who were attendees at the previous general meeting are stated.

There was one new member, Tom McDavid, and one first time attendee, Carl Larsen.

- Dave Huntman, editor

Has your email address changed?

Please make sure that we have your current e-mail address. Now that we are on line, all members with e-mail addresses on file will receive an e-mail stating that the newsletter has been posted to our website for viewing. This could be about half of the membership. The annual savings will be a considerable amount with this system by reducing the number of newsletters to be printed and mailed.

Blood donation at SPEEA?

We have an interesting opportunity offered by an ERS member (see below):

My name is Douglas Wells. I still try to donate blood when I can, but it is not easy since retirement. To make blood donations more convenient for retirees, I would like to coordinate with the Puget Sound Blood Center (PSBC) to schedule a blood drive at the SPEEA Everett Hall. They will commit a mobile unit if we can show enough support from candidate donors.

If you are willing and able to donate at the Everett SPEEA Hall, please e-mail me at **DouglasPime@frontier.com** with the subject line: SPEEA BLOOD DRIVE and include your name, phone number, or e-mail address. You can save a life!!

President's corner

Hi All, Romaine's mom is 93 and not doing well, so she is spending time with her in Buffalo, NY, area. I am teaching skiing with SKIBACS ski school and taking two of our grandkids up for lessons every Saturday.

Dwight and I are currently preparing for the NRLN (National Retiree Legislative Network) annual meeting on Feb. 3-6. The meeting opens Monday with a review of the meeting objectives, an overview of 2013 legislative objectives, and review of the Feb. 4-6 lobbying plans. Some of the talking points in the handout folders are similar to the Legislative Agenda (included in this newsletter). After the meeting, we will post a meeting report on our website. **(Please see more details below)**.

We all need to continue to support ERS / NRLN legislative agenda items such as Social Security and Medicare. Please make a commitment to respond to Action Alerts on our capwiz network. If you are not receiving the Alerts, please go to **www.nrln.org** to sign up or update your information. Responding to the Action Alerts that address retiree issues with Congress is very easy. Based on zip codes, our senators and representative are automatically displayed. Revise the sample letter as little or as much as you wish, review changes, and send.

Check ERS website **www.engineeringretirees.org** to review old newsletters, meeting dates and links of interest.

- President Dave Watt

National Retirees Legislative Network

NRLN 2014 Leadership Conference

Executive Summary:

The conference, Feb. 3-5, provided interesting topics and spirited discussion of objectives and processes to further those objectives. NRLN President Bill Kadereit said that membership in NRLN had dropped this year partially as a result of the creation of NRLN chapters to replace AUSWR. Chapters were created as a way of retaining former AUSWR (Association of US West Retirees) members as members of the NRLN. AUSWR was an association of six Baby Bells formed to jointly fight for lost benefits through the courts. Since their legal options were exhausted, they decided to disband. Their membership lists were transferred to the NRLN chapters but not all of those members paid renewal dues. One of the advantages of chapters is that members do not have to be associated with any particular group of retirees such as ERS members who are retirees with former SPEEA association. In Seattle, the former local AUSWR members have formed a Washington NRLN chapter. So if you have friends that are not eligible for ERS, you can invite them to become NRLN chapter members. The chapters also are being integrated into the Grass Roots Network for responding to Action Alerts and for growing NRLN membership. The presidents of group like ERS were asked to follow up initial Action Alerts in one week with a reminder. We will send out the reminders. It is easy to respond to alerts: put in your zip code, personalize the sample letter as much or little as you like, review, and send to your senators or representatives email address which is automatically provided.

David Watt and Dwight Rousu joined with NRLN vice president Judy Stenberg from Issaquah and met with representatives from western Washington and Oregon states, who happen to be mostly Democratic party members. Support for Social Security protection and Medicare seemed fairly broad and deep, but the details of the PBGC and bankruptcies were sometimes new subjects for the legislative aides, especially the junior aides.

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National Retirees Legislative Network (NRLN) - continued from page 4

We joined Judy on scheduled visits to Senator Jeff Merkley, Senator Ron Wyden, and Representative Susanne Bonamici out of Oregon.

Right now, there is an immediate window following our visits when responses from our members to their legislators who were visited could be important in advocating for protecting Social Security, Medicare, and laws to protect retirees regarding pensions and bankruptcies.

First Day NRLN Talks

NRLN President Bill Kadereit opened the meeting talking about finances and budget, as noted above.

Bill related progress in enhancing the NRLN social media, adding a presence on Facebook and Twitter.

Martha Deahl reported on the first year of the Arizona chapter.

Bob Martina reported on his progress on recruiting grassroots leaders in each state and congressional district around the nation.

Attorney Michael Calabrese, NRLN Legislative Adviser, and Marta Bascom, Executive Director, reported on progress toward creating a 501(C)3 entity within NRLN, which has been until now a 501(C)4 organization. The 501(C)3 part of the NRLN could accept tax deductible contributions for the purpose of conducting studies and education initiatives. Grants for studies could also be conducted.

Curtis Kennedy, attorney representing Verizon retirees, talked on the Verizon suit and De-Risking. "De-risking" is a term for shifting pension risk onto retirees. Some articles from last year are:

http://www.denverpost.com/business/ci_6429201, <http://www.businessinsurance.com/article/20121207/NEWS03/121209894> and related H-1B comments are at <http://americanfreepress.net/?p=2397>.

Much of the information about the Verizon suit and policies the NRLN is advocating to stop risk shifting from corporations to retirees is included in a white paper that was created this past year and can be read on the NRLN web site at www.nrln.org/flyin%20whtpprs/De-risking%20White%20Paper.pdf. There is another court hearing scheduled March 7 in the continuing escalation of the suit, which may eventually reach the Supreme Court.

The Monday afternoon meeting was followed by a social and a dinner at the hotel. Talking with the NRLN members from Kodak, US West, Chrysler, John Deere, United Airlines, and others who have had their retiree benefits threatened and often severely reduced is always a reminder to continue to act to prevent other companies from attacking retirees, such as Boeing, who has been no recent friend of pensions.

The NRLN meeting continued on Tuesday, with Marta and Michael presenting a view of current calendar activities and actions on Capitol Hill, including Senator Harkins' portable pension bill that had just been submitted the previous week. The bill is extremely pertinent, and NRLN is planning to study it and develop a position on it very soon.

The next guest speaker was Jeff Cruz, who is Legislative Assistant for Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, working on aging and retirement. Warren is a prominent though junior member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. Jeff emphasized that he was presenting his personal views off the record, and was not officially speaking for the senator.

Art Roberts presented lessons learned from the Kodak bankruptcy. A key point is that all employees should anticipate and monitor the possibility of their company declaring bankruptcy, and at the first signs of movement in that direction by the company, should immediately get organized and lawyered up so they can quickly move to protect employees and retirees before the court process leaves them behind. In cases threatening bankruptcy, "1114" committees represent retirees, "1113" committees represent active employees.

Given those definitions: There was a strong agreement that bankruptcy laws have to be revised to **require** immediate formation of 1114 committees upon the launch of bankruptcy proceedings, and that the 1114 committees had to be comprised of a group that represents the largest group of retirees, not be a designated puppet artificially created by the corporation or the court. Some 1113 committees and some unions have been known to fail to strongly advocates for retirees, throwing them under the bus for the objective of keeping the jobs that may go with a reconstituted enterprise. Some "bankruptcy" filings have been conducted largely for the purpose of shedding pension obligations, even though the company was profitable. American Airlines took this tactic.

Each bankruptcy goes through different executives and different judges. Bad example: Verizon - trying to dump benefits outside of ERISA and the PBGC. Good" example: GM - keeping annuities inside of the pension plan and under ERISA and PBGC disclosure and protection provisions.

Michael Calabrese spoke in favor of continued shareholder proposals to put in front of shareholder meetings. A particular topic for which he presented an example was a proposal to inhibit golden parachutes to executives.

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National Retirees Legislative Network (NRLN) - continued from page 5

More publicity was suggested by members writing letters to the editor on retiree issues.

NRLN President Bill Kadereit spoke to one of the top NRLN initiatives this year, a request for more current and comprehensive and concise reporting in pension annual funding notices. Congressional oversight pressure is requested for changes in agency procedures and regulations.

Deb Morrissett talked briefly on the initiative to request extending health insurance provisions such as in the Affordable Care Act, to also protect Medigap insurance plans. Currently Medigap plans can still be refused for preexisting conditions, and there is no minimum percentage of the premium that must be actually expended for medical expenses.

Legislative meetings

At each meeting we gave a folder outlining the key focus NRLN issues this year.

Representative Jim McDermott, WA, Theresa Connor, JD, Health Policy Fellow - Dave, Dwight, Judy on Tuesday. We were well received by Theresa, as she had prior familiarity with most of the issues.

Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, OR, Russ Kelley, Legislative Director – Dave, Dwight, Judy, Tuesday.

Senator Jeff Merkley, OR, Susan Lexer, Policy Adviser, and Michael Zamore, Chief of Staff, – Dave, Dwight, Judy, Tuesday.

Representative Suzan DelBene, WA, Casey Katims, Legislative Assistant, Dave, Dwight, Judy, Wednesday. Katims was attentive and familiar with most of the issues.

Representative Rick Larsen, WA, Terra Lynn Sabag, Legislative Director, Dave, Dwight, Judy, Wednesday. Terra had an experienced grasp of and positive response to most of our issues.

Senator Patty Murray, WA, Scott Cheney, Senior Advisor, Teresa Bloom, Retirement Policy Detailee, both working with the Budget Committee - Dave, Dwight, Judy, Wednesday. Scott is senior in one of the largest and most influential staffs in Washington D.C., with Senator Murray, a key member of key committees for seniors. He was supportive and knowledgeable on our issues, which carries forward from our meetings in previous years. Teresa added her informed support for retiree and health issues. Scott specifically inquired about our legislative ask on the issue of pension de-risking. If this were further clarified and communicated, it sounded like he wanted to help on this topic.

Representative Adam Smith, WA, Jonathan Pawlow, Legislative Director – Dave, Dwight, Judy, Wednesday. Jonathan escorted us to the lobby of the House chamber, where Representative Smith was tending to vote calls. We met there briefly in person with Adam, and he listened attentively to our slightly shortened presentation of a couple of our key issues. Judy lives close to Adam, in his district, so she can go knock on his door and continue the conversation.

Representative Earl Blumenauer, OR, Kirsten Donhefner, Dave, Dwight, Judy Wednesday. Kirsten was completing her first month in the representative's staff and happened not to have a business card, so forgive the lack of a title here. This presented the opportunity to introduce many of our top agenda issues to her, and she grasped and seemed sympathetic to most of them.

Dave departed Wednesday for his scheduled flight home.

Senator Ron Wyden, OR, Jonathan Dorset, Legislative Assistant, – Dwight, Judy, Thursday. Jonathan was very engaged on our issues and works with the Committee on Aging. He asked for examples of how many dollars were involved in our examples of misuse of pension assets under the PAP topic. Since Senator Wyden has been active in advocating for removing the secrecy around the TPP treaty (Trans-Pacific Partnership), and leaks indicate there are major provisions in the TPP that affect pharmaceuticals, patent durations, and availability of generics in international trade, we asked for him to investigate what effects this might have on our efforts to reduce prescription costs, particularly with regard to easier import of drugs to reduce costs to seniors and to Medicare.

Senator Maria Cantwell WA - A meeting could not be mutually arranged.

Dwight flew home Thursday evening, joined on the plane by Sen. Murray, Rep. DelBene, rumored sightings of Representatives Kilmer and Reichart.

Endnote:

Dave and Dwight hope we represented your interests as well as possible on this trip. Though it is a bit stressful, it is an honor and a notable experience to make these trips. If you have further questions, feel free to ask either of us. We were busy trying to present the issues rather than take extensive notes, so some of the meeting descriptions above might be a bit sketchy.

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National Retirees Legislative Network (NRLN) - continued from page 6

Issues:

You are invited to go to [NRLN.org](http://www.nrln.org) and read up on each of the focus issues, currently and through the year if they get updated. For reaching each of the issues, the following links will take you there. These sources can inform your emails, local meetings, and faxes to our elected representatives.

Some of the papers are much better written than others, and vice versa.

Listed below is the URL for the NRLN legislative agenda. Each topic has an executive summary here. The full position papers and white papers can also be found on the [NRLN.org](http://www.nrln.org) web site for greater details and references. <http://www.nrln.org/documents/NRLN%20Legislative%20Agenda%202014.pdf>

NRLN President's forum

NRLN Board Adopts 2014 Legislative Agenda and Top Lobbying Initiatives

The NRLN Board of Directors has adopted the NRLN 2014 Legislative Agenda and the Top Lobbying Initiatives.

I want to thank the members of the NRLN Legislative Affairs Committee for their work to gain input from the NRLN-affiliated retiree associations and chapters for the Legislative Agenda. The committee members are Judy Stenberg, Chair, AUSWR – Pension Equity Council OR/WA, Bob Martina, Lucent Retirees Organization, Deb Morrisett, National Chrysler Retirement Organization, and Ray Sternot, AT&T Ameritech/SBC Retirees.

Top Lobbying Initiatives continue to be retirement income security, including protecting Social Security, safeguarding Medicare, and reducing the cost of prescription drugs. To read the 15-page Legislative Agenda on the NRLN website, go to www.nrln.org and click on the Legislative Action link (tab) near the top of the NRLN home page. Here is a summary of our Top Lobbying Initiatives:

- **Protect Social Security** through legislation that addresses the long-term funding gap by modest increases in the payroll tax rate and increasing the cap on maximum wages subject to the tax. There is no need to reduce Social Security Cost of Living Allowances (COLAs), do means-testing or make other cuts in benefits. Social Security Trust assets should be insulated from access by Congress to cover other government spending.
- **Safeguard Medicare** through legislation that increases the Medicare tax on workers and employers until the taxes again fund 60-65% of the Medicare budget. Set fair and equitable rate formulae for determining physician fees and make adjustments up or down annually.
- **Protect Pension Assets** by stopping corporations from using pension assets for non-pension expenses.
- **Protect Retirees in Pension Plan Derisking** when a plan sponsor converts its pension plan to an annuity from an insurance company.
- **Change Annual Funding Notices** to provide pension plan participants a truer financial status of their pension plans.
- **Corporate Bankruptcy Reform** so retirees' pensions and benefits are obligations companies can't shed.
- **Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. Reform** to ensure equitable calculations of benefit payments to retirees.
- **Protection of Retirees in Mergers, Acquisitions & Spin-Offs** by passing legislation that clarifies what a parent foreign owner's pension plan obligations are and require that Plan fiduciaries should be American citizens.
- **Reduce the Cost of Prescription Drugs** through legislation that (1) Enables importation of safe prescription drugs; (2) Enables Medicare to take competitive bids for prescription drugs; (3) Funds the FDA to reduce generic drug approval backlogs; (4) Prevents drug companies from colluding to control pricing.
- **Maintenance of Cost Protection** through legislation to establish a fixed monthly payment to retirees equivalent to the value of the benefits an employer provided prior to the reduction or cancellation of retirement health care, prescription drugs, life insurance, long-term care or other benefits. Companies would receive tax credits that offset MCP payments.
- **Medigap Policies** should have the same protections of Medicare Advantage and Affordable Care Act Policies. Specifically, pre-existing conditions should not be considered when changing insurance during the annual enrollment period. Also, community/regional pricing rather than age related policy pricing should apply.

Your help will be needed in 2014 to be an advocate for our Top Legislative Initiatives with your U.S. Representatives and Senators through NRLN Action Alert emails, making phone calls to their offices and visiting with your elected representatives when they are in their home states and districts. Your financial support of the NRLN through an Individual Membership contribution will also be important.

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National Retirees Legislative Network (NRLN) - continued from page 7

Bill Kadereit, NRLN President
National Retiree Legislative Network

Annual contribution to NRLN

To Engineering Retirees Society Members:

The National Retiree Legislative Network (NRLN) is appealing to you to make your annual contribution, if you have not already done so in 2013. Your annual contribution makes it possible for the NRLN to lobby Congress for retirement income security and reduction of health care costs. Your contribution pays for Internet service for Action Alerts and the capability for you to send an email that goes directly into the offices of your elected representatives. Your funding is also used to send you other messages on important retirement issues and publish the FOCUS newsletters. A donation from you will never be used for political contributions, meals for politicians, sponsor junkets, etc. Our positions stand on their merits, not payouts.

The NRLN is your voice to **protect Social Security and Medicare benefits**. Congress should address the long-term funding gaps of these programs through modest increases in the payroll tax and temporarily suspending the ceiling on earnings that can be taxed until such time the trust funds are actuarially funded. Trust assets should be in a "lock box," preventing access by Congress to cover other government spending.

Also during the last couple of weeks of January, the House and Senate send a revised budget to the President for approval.

Please be aware that included in that proposed budget was a revision to the PENSION BENEFITS GUARANTY CORPORATION (PBGC). Basically the PBGC tries to control the amount of funds available to cover pension plans of companies that go broke. This budget included revisions to the way this government entity gathers money by increasing required payments.

In the opinion of the NRLN this change could – repeat could – entice more companies to change from defined benefit retirement plans to 401k type retirement savings, i.e., as Boeing has done with the latest contract extension for the machinists.

(Editor's comment - watch for the next SPEEA contract discussions!)

Please (*please*) read the details in the NRLN web site.

How You Can Help: Contact your members of Congress when an NRLN Action Alert is issued. Ask friends to sign up at <http://capwiz.com/abtr/mlm/signup/> to receive NRLN emails. If you know someone interested in forming an NRLN chapter in your area, let us know by sending an email to contact@nrln.org or call toll free 1-866-360-7197.

Please make your annual contribution of \$25, \$50, \$75 or more. Any amount you can contribute will be appreciated. You may make your check or money order payable to **NRLN, Inc.** and **mail it with the Contribution Form below to the address on the form.** Or, make your contribution online with your credit card on the NRLN website at www.nrln.org by clicking on the "Join Us" tab on the home page and selecting "Support the NRLN."

Dave Watt

Dave Watt, President, ERS

Bill Kadereit

Bill Kadereit, President, NRLN

NRLN MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTION

Engineering Retirees Society

The NRLN is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. Contributions are not tax deductible.

Name: _____ **Age:** __ under 55; __ 55-64; __ 65 or over

Address: _____ **City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: _____ **Email Address (if available):** _____

I draw my retirement benefits from _____ **(name of company)**

Mail this form with your check or money order (no cash please) for \$25, \$50, \$75 or more (any amount will be appreciated) payable to **NRLN, Inc., P.O. Box 18757, Washington, D.C. 20036-8757.**

On The Lighter Side

The following are from different sources:

From James Ewing (ERS secretary):

"Five mornings a week, my husband goes to the health club, gets on the stair-stepper, sets the timer, and buries his nose in a book. Recently, he noticed an amazingly fit middle-aged woman who seemed to run circles around everyone, took few breaks, and rarely even broke a sweat. "It's not fair," he complained. "By the time I'm dragging myself off to the showers, she's hopping back onto the stepper for another session." One day he came home with a sheepish grin. "Well," he said, "I just found out how she does it – identical twins."

"While on a trip with the family, I thought it would be good to teach my 5-year-old daughter a few things. As we passed a sign, I told her that is the name of the town for the next exit. As we passed the exit, I told her how we were passing the town. A few exits later, she noticed the sign for gas. As we passed the exit, much to her delight, she informed us we were passing gas."

One Halloween, a man was walking down the street and heard a thumping noise behind him. Looking behind him, he saw a coffin following him, upright. He was a bit nervous and began walking a little bit faster. The coffin continued, "thumpety thump, thumpety thump." He began running and the coffin kept up and began opening and closing, "thumpety thump, thumpety thump clap, thumpety thump, thumpety thump clap." Terrified he ran to his front door, and went inside, slamming the door and locking it. The coffin continued, "thumpety thump, thumpety thump." CRASH - it came right through the door. He ran up the stairs, and right behind him, "thumpety thump, thumpety thump clap, thumpety thump, thumpety thump clap." He rushed into the bathroom and slammed the door, but the coffin broke through the door - "thumpety thump, thumpety thump crash." Terrified the man grabbed the first thing he could, a bottle of Robitussin and threw it - and the coffin stopped! As everyone knows Robitussin stops coffin!!"

Attributed to Ronald Reagan

An engineer, a lawyer and an economist were arguing about which of them practiced the oldest profession. The engineer said that God created the universe out of chaos and 'that was an engineering job.' 'Wait a minute' said the lawyer. 'The Bible says that in the beginning, before chaos, was 'the Word . . . the Law.' So lawyers clearly were first. By this time, the economist was laughing. He asked them: 'Who do you think created the chaos in the first place?'

From astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson

A 'Higgs boson' goes into a church and the priest says "We don't allow Higgs bosons here," and the Higgs boson says, 'but without me there would be no mass'.

A photon walks into a bar and orders a drink, the bartender says "Do you want a double?" and the photon says 'No thanks, I'm traveling light.'

A young man asks an older person "Have you heard of the band '1020Megabites'?" No says the listener. "Of course, you haven't. They haven't got any gigs yet!"

PASSAGES

Alice M. Savage passed away recently. Survived by her husband, Herbert Savage.

Bruno Pascuzzi died Nov. 10, 2012 at age 98. No other data known.

James A. Journey died Jan. 21, 2013. No other information known.

Arthur Kaku recently passed away, no date known. Survived by his daughter, Sharon Kaku.

Richard P. Brown passed away recently, no date known. Survived by his wife, Rosann Brown.

Robert Shirrod passed away July 7, 2013. Survived by his wife, Avonelle.

Francis (Frank) Taylor died shortly before April 16, 2013. He is survived by his wife, Heather Taylor. On a personal note, Myrv Johanson (who shares the Sunshine Chair) knew Frank as a coworker for quite a long time.

Joseph Bales-Kogan passed away on July 16, 2013. He is survived by his wife, Hana, of 909 Bay St., LPH2, Toronto, Ontario, 553G-2, Canada

Edward DeGroot, ERS #1486, passed away. He is survived by his son, 23600 Marine View Drive So., Apt 227, Des Moines, WA 98198. No date given.

Albert Boffey passed away (date unknown) and is survived by his wife, Inez. No other data.

(Recent information for the above named members.)

Engineering Retirees Society
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