

NewsLetter

PPSPERA IS SUPPORTED BY COLORADO SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 11

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Editor: Alan Rasmussen



From Your President

It is certainly a pleasure to be able to communicate with each of you. Since the last newsletter I have been very ill and missed several meetings. I spent 15 days at Memorial Hospital. At first we thought I had the stomach flu but it was finally diagnosed with C-Diff. Clostridium difficile (klos-TRID-e-

uhm dif-uh-SEEL), often called C. difficile or C. diff, a bacterium that can cause symptoms ranging from diarrhea to life-threatening inflammation of the colon. C. difficile typically occurs after use of antibiotic medications. Thank goodness I am now on the road to full recovery.

I understand the February 4th General Membership meeting was excellent. Thanks to John Kerr and Joyce Schmaltz for making the meeting such a success.

At the meeting, Peggy Gardener, our PERA ambassador, reported that Carole Wright has been named President of the PERA Board of Trustees. She pointed out that no one makes any changes in PERA except the Legislature which makes it so important for each of us to be aware of upcoming legislation and to express our thoughts to our legislators.

John introduced the program for the day, Opportunities for Lifelong Learning at PILLAR, Colorado Springs Senior Center, UCCS Listening Up, and New Horizon Bands.

PILLAR: Dave Rich, Executive Director, described how PILLAR is structured. The organization is mostly run by volunteers. It's purpose is to create an environment in which adults will stay engaged. Membership is \$60/year. Classes cost about \$12 each and are taught by volunteers. Dave encouraged people to read the PILLAR preview and become involved.

COLORADO SPRINGS SENIOR CENTER: Mendy Putman, Executive Director, reported that Senior Center is now under the control of the Housing Authority of Colorado Springs. It serves a large population of seniors, specifically low income seniors, and the meal program is housed at the Hancock location. The Senior Center offers many services and classes as well as special events. Information about their offerings can be found in Life After Fifty, a publication which comes out monthly. or by stopping in at the Senior Center on 1514 N Hancock. Note: Sixty groups call the Senior Center home and the website is at www.cssenior.com

UCCS LISTENING UP: Candice Bennet spoke of the opportunity for seniors to attend classes at UCCS on campus. Classes run for 16 weeks usually 40 hrs/course. Cost is \$30/credit hour or \$90/16 week course. It will show up as a non-credit course. Presently there are about 50 people taking advantage of this program. There are also on-line courses available with 300 different topics. Information for these classes are available on the website. UCCS also offers many cultural opportunities including an Art Gallery.

NEW HORIZONS BAND OF THE PIKES PEAK REGION: Bill Callen spoke of his group of seniors over 40years old who meet at Nazarene Bible College for beginner through expert players. The band is the community outreach program for Nazarene Bible College and meets twice a week on Tuesday and Thursday. An intergenerational music camp is offered in the summer. This organization also has a web-site.

Joyce Schmaltz spoke about another band organization called New Horizon Band of Colorado Springs. It too provides opportunities for seniors to learn to play or continue to play music. It too has a website.

Scholarship: Meredith Jobe announced that information for applying for two scholarships went out to schools in Teller and El Paso counties. The recipients of the scholarships will be guests at the May meeting. The scholarships are for \$1500 each. Last year's winners will have the opportunity to apply for an additional \$500 if certain criteria are met. She urged everyone to contribute to the scholarship fund.

Distinguished Service Award and Community Service Award: Marje Ericksen reported that she needs help finding people who are deserving of these awards. Nominations should be in to Marje before the April board meeting.

Website: Lisa Sarter urged people to visit the website. She noted that lots of information is available including the newsletter and links to CSPERA and PERA.

I know all who attended enjoyed and benefited from this very interesting and informative session. Mark your calendars now for the Spring Meeting which is scheduled for Wednesday, May 11, 9:30 am at Valley Hi Golf Course. We will include a flyer with this newsletter but will also send a reminder flyer closer to the event. Make your reservations now.

This year PPSPERA led by Dave DiCocco is once again presenting a Pre-Retirement Seminar on April 6th at 6:15pm at Tesla Staff Development Center for those considering retirement within the next couple of years.

The next board meeting is scheduled for April 5th, 9:00 am at Maggie Mae's Restaurant. You are welcome to join us that morning.

Many of you are probably aware that PERA continues to be under attack. The latest is HB 11-1248, which is sponsored by Representative Jim Kerr (R-Littleton) and Senator Ellen Roberts (R-Durango). It is different from HB-1008 (defeated earlier this year) in that it would replace three trustee positions currently elected by PERA members, with three people appointed by the Governor. The new appointees would join the Board as the terms of elected trustees expire. When fully implemented, PERA members would elect a total of eight trustees or benefit recipients and a total of six trustees would be appointees of the Governor. The state treasurer would remain on the Board as a voting member, and a non-voting member or retiree from the DPS Division would remain on the Board. The PERA Board opposes this. It has passed committee and now will go to the House.

See you at Valley Hi on Wednesday, May 11th where we will not only recognize our award winners but will also have a program highlighting the new, strong mayoral governance for the City of Colorado Springs.

– Sandy Patton

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2011 PPSPERA SCHOLARSHIPS

PPSPERA will again award two scholarships, in honor of Wayne Bricker and Bill Brandenburg, to high school seniors pursuing a career in education or public service. The amount of each scholarship is \$1,500. The scholarship and application information has been sent to principals and head counselors at each El Paso and Teller County high school and the deadline is March 31, 2011. The two scholarship recipients will be invited to attend the PPSPERA general membership meeting on May 11 at Valley Hi Golf Club.

New this year...the 2010 scholarship recipients, Katharine Lindquist and Abel Martinez, will have the opportunity to apply to renew their scholarship for \$500 for a 2nd year of study. Their renewal applications and materials are due June 1, 2011.

These PPSPERA scholarships can only be offered with the support of our membership. Thank you for contributing to the PPSPERA scholarship fund.

Tour the Website

Tours can be informative and fun! Let's take a quick tour and walk through some highlights of our website. Open up the website at www.ppspera.org and by using this article as a guide, let's see what is available.



On the left of the first page is the navigation bar. The titles of the pages on the navigation bar are listed below in order of their appearance. Click on the title and use the information I have given you to see what is on each page. Every page has this navigation bar so you can always get to a page you want to see.

HOME This is the first page you see when you go to the website. There is a letter from our president, Sandy Patton, the mission of our group and upcoming events.

ABOUT US Explains who we are and why it is important to join.

CALENDAR Has upcoming events and a calendar with events of PPSPERA. You will also be able to click and go to the state website and the northern Colorado's (our sister group up north) website.

MEMBERSHIP Click on membership and view our bylaws. There is also a membership form that you can print off to join our group and the state group.

NEWSLETTERS Just what it says- our newsletters are archived on this page so that you can go back and review information covered in the past as well as see the most recent newsletter. Newsletters require PDF or adobe reader to view so as a convenience to you we have a link for you to click on and download the latest Adobe Reader right on this page!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS Minutes from Board meetings, list of directors names, and emails, as well as By-laws and standing rules of our organization.

SCHOLARSHIPS PPSPERA gives out scholarships each year. Find out information on the who, how, and when of scholarship procedure.

RESOURCES Here is a list of websites that may be of interest to our membership, including opportunities for seniors around Colorado Springs.

CONTACT US Have a specific question or a suggestion? Click on the email link and send us your question. You will receive a response as quickly as possible.

I hope this was informative. Please contact me if you have any questions. tech@ppspera.org

Lisa Sarter, Electronic Communications

PERA Notes from Peggy Gardner

By the time you read this article, at least one of the bills below that are currently in the legislature, SB 076, may be a done deal. I urge you to contact your legislators to let them know of your concerns about the viability of our PERA pension if some of these bills are enacted. Your voice is important! I have offered a comment at the end of each explanation of the bill. Go to www.copera.org for the latest legislative news.

SB 11-076 Continuation of Contribution Rate Swap Through June 30, 2012: The Legislature's Joint Budget Committee proposed legislation to continue the contribution rate swap enacted last year. State and Judicial Division members of PERA have been paying 2.5 percent of salary less to PERA since July 1, 2010, and the state has been paying 2.5 percent less to PERA since that date. According to the March 17, 2011 Gazette, the bill was amended on March 16 by the state House Finance Committee to allow school districts to make the same switch. Because some employees will terminate employment and elect to withdraw their contributions along with a 50 percent match, the swap harms the actuarial funding of PERA employer contributions remain in the trust fund, making their contributions more valuable in funding PERA than member contributions. This bill reduces PERA's funded position. The bill now goes to the House and the PERA Board opposes it. I feel it should be defeated as it would adversely affect the funding/solvency of PERA.

SB 11-127 Defined Contribution Plan for New Employees: This bill would have required all new hires by a PERA employer to become members of a defined contribution plan administered by PERA, and they would not be allowed to join the PERA defined benefit plan. The Senate State, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee

postponed the bill indefinitely on February 14. This bill would certainly affect the future funding and solvency of PERA. I hope it does not reappear.

HB 11-1248 Change in PERA Board Composition: HB 11-1248 would replace three trustee positions currently elected by PERA members with three people appointed by the Governor. The new appointees would join the Board as the terms of elected trustees expire. When fully implemented, a total of eight trustees would be elected by PERA members and a total of six trustees would be appointees of the Governor. The state treasurer would remain on the Board as a voting member and a non-voting member or retiree from the DPS Division would remain on the Board. For a complete description of this bill, go to the PERA website. This bill was passed in the House on second reading and is scheduled for third reading on March 18. *It is my opinion that appointees might not resist pressure from the political and financial arena. Our trustees have shown good faith through their dedication by working toward achieving solvency in 30 years. It should be noted that contribution rates and benefits can be changed only by the legislature. In the past, legislative decisions have had dire consequences in economic downturns.*

We Will Miss Them

The following friends and colleagues have passed away since our last issue: Bernice Brister, Mary Louise Caudell, Edgar "Ed" Cole, Sandra Jean Rooney Cox, Veronica Hurry, Ann S. Lewis, Carolanne McCaffrey, Karen Martin, Mel Mickelson, Phyllis Nicoll, Mary Louise O'Donnell, Wilber Parker, Lillian Scott, Richard Stafford, Reneta Vaughn, Elizabeth "Betty" Witt and Dewayne Crumb.

PPSPERA MEETING CALENDAR

2011

April 5 at 9 am	Board Meeting	Maggie Mae's
April 6 – 6:15-9 pm	Pre-Retirement Seminar	Tesla
May 11 at 9:30 am	General Membership Brunch & Program	Valley Hi Golf Course
October 13 & 14	CSPERA Board Meeting & State Legislative Wkshop	Denver
October 27 at 9 am	Board Meeting	Maggie Mae's
November 3 at 9:30 am	General Membership Brunch & Program	Valley Hi Golf Course

Spring Membership Meeting and Brunch

Wednesday, May 11, 2011 at 9:30 a.m.

Breakfast/Brunch Buffet - \$15

Valley Hi Golf Club

610 South Chelton Road, Colorado Springs, CO

Honor and Recognize Award Winners

Install New Officers

Learn about the new, strong Office of Colorado Springs Mayor

Reservations Due May 5, 2011

Please complete and mail this portion along with your check made payable to PPSPERA to Judy McCormick, 806 Orion Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80906.

Please make _____ reservation(s) for the PPSPERA Brunch at \$15 each \$ _____
Additional Donation for the Scholarship Fund \$ _____
Total enclosed for brunch and scholarship fund \$ _____.

Name _____ Phone _____

Due to a required reservation number we will not be able to give refunds for no shows.

Mail Your Reservation Today