



**RPEA Southcentral Chapter  
Membership Meeting Agenda**  
February 9, 2016  
(Facilitated by Bill Mans & Scott Chapman)

**Approval of the agenda**

**Approval of the January minutes (attached)**

**Announcements**

- **Thanks to those who made this meeting possible**
- **Lunch Feedback Card**  
If you had lunch today, please tell us how it was by filling out the card.
- **Teleconferencing Capabilities**  
Is now available to all SC members. Please call in at 11:40 for announcements to begin at 11:45. The teleconference number is 888-636-3807 / access code 9742514.
- **Member Attendance**  
Please be reminded that only RPEA members may attend a membership meeting.<sup>1</sup> Membership is identified at the sign-in table for those who attend in person; therefore, roll call will be conducted of all who attend by phone.
- **Board Vacancies**  
There are several vacancies on the SC Chapter Board. Please consider volunteering your skill and talents to your RPEA board. All interested parties please contact any board member (see attached listing of current board members) or Fran Rabago at [franrabago@gci.net](mailto:franrabago@gci.net)

**TaxAide – A Free Tax Preparation Program For You**

A cooperative effort between the IRS, AARP and a lot of VOLUNTEERS.  
Information will also be provided concerning SCAMS.

Presented by **Jan Watson**  
Alaska Prospective Volunteer Specialist AARP TaxAide,  
APCAA Treasurer

**Remember:** Private conversations during a presentation make it hard for others to hear.

Retired Public Employees of Alaska

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<sup>1</sup> An eligible individual who is considering joining RPEA may attend as a guest if sponsored by an RPEA member.

## Southcentral Chapter Membership Meeting January 13, 2014

The meeting was called to order at approximately noon by Bill Mans, who was filling in for Fran Rabago who is enjoying sunny Florida this month.

The Agenda was approved with no changes.

The past meeting notes were approved after the following changes were noted:

- 1) Mel Monson's name was incorrectly spelled
- 2) Ms. Pitney's slide show from the December meeting was not attached as stated. However, the slide show will be provided at the RPEA website.

RPEA Volunteers: Monthly RPEA meetings happen because of RPEA's members who volunteer to help out. In December we owe a special thanks to:

Shirley Iverson – Cashier  
Jeanne Ostnes – sign in table  
Marie Beatty – nametags  
Mel Monson – distributed handouts and collected meal tickets  
Bill Mans – conducted the meeting and called out table numbers  
Gordon Glaser – Traveling microphone

Bill asked for a show of hands of those who were not RPEA members. 6 guests were in attendance who were not members and they were thanked for coming and encouraged to join. 85 people were in attendance, 71 of whom purchased lunch, 8 had coffee and another 7 had nothing. There were also 3 people who phoned in.

Elizabeth Dennis won the book provided by today's speaker.  
Nancy Berlen won the Peach Preserves.  
Linda Cameran won the giant cinnamon roll

Sharon Hoffbeck, RPEA's Executive Vice President, was the first speaker. Sharon passed on the latest status of the Medical Information Committee's negotiations with the State Division of Retirement and Benefits (DRB).

PERS Retirees are entitled to a 10% Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) if they remain state residents. Should a retiree leave the state for more than 90 consecutive days, the COLA is forfeited until and unless the individual returns. Exceptions are granted for retirees who need to remain out of the state for medical reasons certified by a doctor. Recently these exceptions have been increasing and the DRB arbitrarily added a clause to the form indicating this was a one-time opportunity. The Medical Information Committee (MIC) reviewed the statute and determined there was no such limitation and has gotten the DRB to agree. DRB will be or has already revised the form to delete that language but add further language to clarify what medical issues might qualify for the exception.

Since the beginning of 2014 when Aetna became AlaskaCare's Third Party Administrator (TPA), RPEA is firmly convinced the medical benefits retirees have earned have been diminished. This is primarily because DRB defers to Aetna to determine benefits based on internal policies they utilize to determine eligibility for claims by all of their insured beneficiaries nationwide, whether or not those policies conflict with AlaskaCare. The same holds true for the Dental, Vision and Audio (DVA) and Long Term Care (LTC) benefits which are totally funded by retirees. DRB takes the position that nothing has changed and there has been no diminishment in the retiree medical benefit plan. They consider DVA and LTC not constitutionally protected, and have made many reductions since January 1, 2014. RPEA has been negotiating with DRB for over the past two years trying to resolve this dispute with very limited success to date. Litigation may yet be required to ultimately resolve the matter. Diminishment of medical benefits has been litigated in the past and the State Supreme Court has ruled that retiree medical benefits are, in fact, constitutionally protected and that the state may not diminish those benefits. Any reductions to those benefits must be offset by enhanced benefits of equal or greater value. The DRB contends, however, that the DVA and LTC plans do not enjoy the same level of protection and that the state may make changes to those benefits as they see fit.

There have been successes, however. The MIC has worked with many retirees whose claims have been denied and in many cases have gotten DRB to reverse Aetna's denials. Unfortunately, such reversals typically apply only on a case-by-case basis and the next time Aetna receives a similar claim it may be denied again. This is why the MIC encourages those who have been denied for a service that would previously have been covered to appeal those denials up through the Administrative Hearing process – Appeal Level III. Once the Administrative Hearing Officer rules on a claim, the state may be required to apply that ruling to all future similar claims. The MIC will assist retirees through this admittedly arduous process.

Sharon introduced Brad Owens who has agreed to take the Medical Information Director position. Brad explained the appeal process in further detail.

Finally, the Retirement Benefits Committee has been in negotiations with DRB to establish a Retiree Advisory Board to advise DRB on issues regarding retiree medical, DVA and LTC benefits. This Board will be adopted by regulation, rather than legislation, and is hoped to be established later this year.

Our second speaker was Laurel Renkert, a financial advisor with Waddell and Reed. Laurel passed out a worksheet to the group entitled "What's More Important than Money"? She suggested that "Time" may be just as important to retirees as money and that how we spend our time should be evaluated and reconsidered based on what we think are the most important things we should be doing with the limited time we have left. According to surveys, retirees on average spend most of their awake time watching TV and very little time exercising or engaging in more productive and healthy activities. (if this shoe fits, you might consider joining the Anchorage Senior Activity Center and participating in our wonderful fitness and wellness program. It will extend your life and enable you to engage in more healthy and fun activities for much longer than sitting in the Lazy Boy watching TV.)

Minutes by Kris Warren

## **RPEA Southcentral Chapter Board Members**

1/23/16

Fran Rabago, Chairperson  
Scott Chapman, Vice Chair  
Shirley Iverson, Treasurer  
Peggy Hackett, Hospitality  
Bob Madigan  
Kris Warren  
Bill Mans

The SC Chapter of RPEA has several Board vacancies. All interested parties please contact anyone on the board by leaving a message for them at 907-274-1688, or by contacting Fran Rabago at [franrabago@gci.net](mailto:franrabago@gci.net)

### **Mission Statement**

*A nonpartisan effort to educate, inform, and provide opportunities for input from retired public employees and those nearing retirement regarding issues and subjects that promote their best interests and affect the enjoyment and benefits of their retirement years.*