

# SRSRA NEWSLETTER

For SRS Retiree Association Members

Bob & Pat Stokes, Editors

Volume 19 November 2003

## **SRSRA 2004 ANNUAL MEETING** **March 9, 2004**

### **AIKEN COMMUNITY PLAYHOUSE**

in the **WASHINGTON CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS**

(on Newberry Street in Aiken)

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TIME TO RENEW YOUR SRSRA MEMBERSHIP FOR 2004

(see last page of this newsletter)

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### **Chairman's Letter**

Since this is the last Newsletter of the year, I will take this opportunity to **congratulate all the committees and the Board of Directors (BOD)** for a great job in 2003. We are fortunate to have a group of highly dedicated individuals working collectively to maintain our benefits and manage the Association's business. It is a pleasure to be part of it.

Following are key items your BOD has addressed since our last Newsletter:

- The Pension Committee proposed a position paper on future pension adjustments. It was approved by the BOD at the October meeting. This position paper establishes criteria for future pension increases.
- Regarding the U. S. Congress's Prescription Drug Bill, BOD members are contacting the local CSRA Congressional Delegation. If you have already contacted your Senator or Congressman, thank you. If you

have not done so, we need your help now to make our position known. (See the information at the end of this Newsletter regarding projected cost to you as a retiree.) We are paying more for health insurance than ever before; the last thing we need is more costs for less coverage! **ACT NOW!!** For those of us already on Medicare, the problems with the “Blues” continue. It seems like billing documents from Medicare and our Medical Providers get lost all too often. I have had BC/BS claim to have not seen duplicate records submitted for the same treatment from both Medicare and the Provider. It seems like our Medicare paperwork load on BC/BS may be getting round-filed!! We plan to discuss these recurring BC/BS issues with WSRC Management. I recommend that you keep up the vigil on your Medicare and BC/BS claims, do not hesitate to challenge BC/BS on any denied coverage.

We are currently contacting WSRC Management to set up a meeting to begin discussion on all open issues and mutual support areas. The discussion will most assuredly cover the issues I have just mentioned.

Did you respond to the request for support from Global Energy Services? (See the article in the last Newsletter. Yep, there has been a slight change in their name—Energy is substituted for Engineering.) These folks are in need of your services; their workload continues to grow. The good news is that employment by them will not affect your pension payments. You should assess the effects on your Social Security since taxes on Social Security benefits are dependent on your age and how much you earn.

We continue to need help contacting retirees for membership. Retirees qualifying for membership approach 2000. We can at least triple our membership by simply contacting retirees we know. The number of paid members are very important when meeting with WSRC management and members of the Congressional Delegation. **Help your cause and recruit members!**

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** The location for our monthly BOD meetings has been changed. Due to the near doubling of rental costs (\$35 to \$60), we will no longer meet at the Knights of Columbus. The December meeting will be on the usual date at the usual time (first Tuesday at 10:00 A.M.), but will be held at the Holiday Inn Express on Whiskey Road. There will be no charge to use this room.

Subsequently, a site for future meetings will be chosen from among the Hampton Inn on Whiskey Road, the Aiken County Council Chambers, or the Aiken Library. There will not be a rental fee for any of these locations. As soon as the BOD has decided upon which location it prefers, the membership will be informed.

In the meantime, the 2004 SRSRA Annual Meeting will be held on March 9, 2004, in the auditorium of the Washington Center for the Performing Arts on Newberry Street. (The Center is just a few steps from last year’s meeting location; it is at the end of “The Alley” and across the street.) Mark your calendar for March 9, 2004, and expect more information on the Annual Meeting in the next few months.

Sincerely,

Dave Cowfer, Chairman  
Savannah River Site Retiree Association

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## Pension Adjustment Planning

The pension adjustment effort continues to move forward. The Committee presented a proposed position paper containing a detailed overall strategy to the Board of Directors at the September 9 meeting. After discussion, the Board decided to postpone action until the October 14 meeting to give members of the Board time to individually review the details of the proposed position paper. After an extended discussion at the October 14 meeting, the proposed position paper was unanimously approved by your Board of Directors. The next step in the process is for the officers of the Board to present the SRSRA position on pension adjustments to the appropriate stakeholders in the approval process.

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## ORA Activities

**New ORA Representative Needed:** Paul Katonak's membership on the ORA Board expires on Jan 1. He has served two terms and is ready to step down. The job currently involves attending between six and eight two hour board meetings a year on site. Please advise Nick Kuehn at [nhkuehn3@msn.com](mailto:nhkuehn3@msn.com) if you would be interested in representing the SRS Retiree Association on the ORA Board.

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## SRSRA Board of Directors

The Annual Meeting will be held March 9, 2004, at the Aiken Community Playhouse on Newberry Street in downtown Aiken. Plan to attend to learn about activities during the past year and plans for 2004. The election of Board members will take place at the annual meeting.

## Election of Board Members

Elections for one-half of the Board Members (15 positions) will take place at the March 2004 Annual Meeting. We are looking for a few good men and women to stand for election and serve on the Board. Board members are expected to attend the monthly meetings on the first Tuesday of the month at 10:00 am and to serve on one of the committees. It does not take a tremendous amount of time, but volunteers should expect to spend several hours a month on committee work. If you are interested in helping to define program plans for the SRS Retiree Association and serving your fellow retirees as a board member, contact Nick Kuehn at 803-648-2849 or e-mail him at [nhkuehn3@msn.com](mailto:nhkuehn3@msn.com).

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## Newsletter Mailing

As with the previous newsletter, we are continuing to use the internet email to reach many of our members. This will speed up delivery to many of our members and will minimize our time and costs for a hard copy mailing. **If you have an email address and you did not receive this newsletter over the internet, please correspond with Pat and Bob Stokes at [Robert40@bellsouth.net](mailto:Robert40@bellsouth.net) and give us your correct email address for future use.** (We lost email contact with Wesley Howarth, W. F. Hindle, Wally Sumner, Charles Hopkins, J. D. Woodward, and W. R. Hartshorn since the last Newsletter distribution. Can you provide updated information?)

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## **Yearly Physicals for Retirees in CSRA**

Just a note to remind all local area (CSRA) retirees that yearly physicals can be arranged through Internal Medicine Partners at 3121 Peach Orchard Road, Augusta, GA. (Tel: 706-792-5075) The phone number is also included regularly in the benefits contacts list. **You should retain the contacts list for future reference.** The cost for the service is your co-pay amount with BC/BS paying the rest. **You should not receive any additional charges for a routine physical.**

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## **Medical Benefits Issue:**

**(Editors Note: By the time you read this article the bill may have already passed both the House and Senate. Even so, you should assess the bill's impact on you when it is finally implemented.)**

### **Prescription Drug Bill Concerns:**

The Congress is rushing a Medicare supplement bill to provide prescription drug coverage. As presently written, THIS IS A BAD BILL. We will explain below why the SRSRA believes you should write to your congressional representatives and your Senators, and urge them to vote AGAINST this bill. We believe, too, that you should write the President and urge him not to sign the bill. Even though he has urged Congress to give him a bill that would provide prescription drug coverage to seniors, the one being discussed in Congress is poorly constructed and will cost you more money than you now spend on medicine.

According to the New York Times,

"Negotiators working to reconcile the House and Senate Medicare bills said they have reached an agreement on the structure of a Medicare prescription drug benefit." Under the tentative plan, the federal government would pay 75% of beneficiaries' drug costs up to \$2,200 per year. Beneficiaries would pay a \$275 deductible and average monthly premiums of \$35.

Beneficiaries whose drug costs exceed the \$2,200 annual cap would pay out of pocket from that point until their drug costs reached about \$3,600, when catastrophic coverage would begin."

The following analysis shows how much this bill will cost SRS retirees:

As stated above, each participant would be required to pay an additional \$35/month in increased Medicare premiums. These premiums would amount to \$420 per year plus 25% of the cost of the prescription drugs. The first \$2200 of drug costs would cost \$550 plus the \$420 Medicare premium. That is a minimum of \$970 for the first \$2200 of drug costs.

The next \$1400 in prescription drug costs would be paid out of the retirees pocket. So for the first \$3600 of prescription drug costs, the retiree would pay \$970 plus \$1400, or a total of \$2370. For a two person family, retiree plus spouse, the cost would be twice that amount, or \$4740 each year! Even if only one of the couple would need prescription drugs, both would have to pay the Medicare premium.

You can determine what the first \$3600 of prescription drugs would cost under your present retirement plan. For example, if you presently have Standard Choice, you would pay the first \$400, plus 20% of the next \$3200, or \$1040.

Thus, under the proposed Medicare plan, the Standard Choice participant would pay \$2370 - \$1040, or \$1330 more for the first \$3600 of prescription drugs.

Clearly, the proposed plan would cause a major increase in the medical expense for every retiree who already has medical insurance. This is true, not only for SRS retirees, but for all the millions of retirees from other companies who provide retiree medical coverage.

Those of you who are now on Medicare know the confusion, inconsistencies, illogic, and unfairness of the present "carve-out" policy that governs how BC/BS reimburses for medical expenses when Medicare is the primary insurer. Simply put, this carve-out policy would reduce the coverage you now have.

The proposed Medicare bill to provide prescription drug coverage will cost you far more than you now spend for medicine. The SRSRA Board of Directors unanimously urges you to **WRITE YOUR LEGISLATORS AND ASK THEM TO VOTE AGAINST THE PROPOSED MEDICARE BILLS.**

--John Church, Chairman, Medical Benefits Committee--

**More on the Prescription Drug Coverage Issue:**

I think contacts with our elected representatives should simply request two things to protect existing benefits.

1. Any current employer provided coverage shall be the primary prescription drug coverage plan or be protected just as Congress has chosen to protect the Federal Employees medical coverage program.
2. Current coverage shall not be capped at the amounts allowable under Medicare and shall not be altered to reduce benefits presently provided.

Secondly, the letter could clearly point out that the proposed legislation is a new tax (the \$35 monthly premium/per Medicare participant) on those who may, or may not, need the coverage and a financial windfall for big corporations who will pass their prescription drug responsibilities on to the Medicare program.

As we are all aware, the present WSRC health plan operates contrary to the two items above for current medical benefits. When someone turns 65, the WSRC plan becomes the secondary payer. Additionally, the amount the plan will reimburse suddenly drops capped by the clause that says, "up to the Medicare Allowable amount". Often the Medicare Allowable is less than the WSRC BC/BS allowable.

**UNDER THIS PROPOSED MEDICARE BILL, YOU WILL PAY MORE FOR PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE.** (see John Church's analysis above to see what effect it may have on your costs)

--Sid Curry, Chairman, Website Committee--

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## **SRS Activities**

### **Potential Impact of SRS on the Offsite Public remains low**

The potential impact of SRS on the offsite public continues to be far below the DOE all-pathway dose standard of 100 millirem per year, according to the SRS Environmental Report for 2002, which was recently issued. The largest radiation dose that any single offsite individual could have received from SRS operations in 2002 is estimated to be 0.18 millirem (a millirem is a standard unit of measure for radiation exposure), which is only 0.18 percent of the DOE standard. This estimated dose is also well under the average dose of about 300 millirem per year to people in the U.S.A. – and slightly less than the revised 2001 dose of 0.19 millirem. Compliance with environmental regulations and DOE Orders related to environmental protection provides assurance that onsite processes do not adversely impact the environment.

### **SRS Employees/Retirees United Way Campaign Raises over \$2.2 Million.**

SRS employees and retirees are celebrating raising over \$2.2 million for this year's area United Way Agencies. WSRC, Bechtel, BNFL, BWXT Savannah River employees together with SRS Retirees donated a grand total of \$2,229,668 during the annual United Way campaign, 11% higher than the goal. Contributions from SRSRA members totaled \$9,881. Twelve local agencies are designated to receive contributions from the campaign. Let's see if we can beat this contribution in 2004.

### **40 Year Era Comes to a Close**

On October 28, 2003, after almost 40 years of safely receiving, handling and storing spent nuclear fuel, the employees of SRS's Receiving Basin for Offsite Fuels (RBOF) removed the last unit of fuel from the basin, shipping the bundle across the site, in preparation for RBOF's closure. All of the fuel once stored in RBOF has now been moved to the site's canyon facilities for processing or to the L Area storage basin. WSRC President Bob Pedde said that this is not just the end of an era but an achievement that puts the perfect finishing touch on this facility's proud history. Initially, we thought completing this task by 2006 would be difficult. By safely completing the RBOF deinventory, the site is saving approximately \$12M per year of operating costs.

RBOF was built in the early 1960's to help the nation fulfill its obligations under the Atoms for Peace plan initiated by President Eisenhower in 1953.

### **SRS begins Test of Paper as an Alternative Fuel Source.**

In September, SRS began a year-long test of a cost effective new source of heating fuel that cuts down the site's coal usage while reducing emissions and decreasing the amount of paper trash sent to a landfill. The site has traditionally used coal in its A-Area steam plant boiler to provide steam for heating and process support for SRTC and other A-Area buildings. The steam plant has now begun a new way of operating, using fuel that is a mixture of approximately 70% coal and 30% pellets made from compressed recycled paper and cardboard. The Site's Process Engineered Fuel Facility turns recyclable paper products into pellets for use in the steam plant. First it shreds the paper and cardboard, then forms it into dense pellets. These pellets are then fed with the coal into the boilers. The facility produced over 3 tons of pelletized fuel for the year-long test.

## **SRS Accelerates shipments of Nuclear Waste to New Mexico.**

During September, SRS reached another milestone in the removal of waste from the Site, sending its 200th. shipment to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in New Mexico. In reaching this milestone, the Site also reached a new peak in the rate that it is shipping this type of nuclear waste, called "transuranic waste" (TRU), out of South Carolina. TRU consists of clothing, tools, rags, residues, debris and other items contaminated with small quantities of radioactive elements including trace amounts of plutonium. The Site, which began shipping to WIPP in 2001, is now making 24 shipments per month compared to the one shipment per month they were making two years ago, and the eight per month they were making just one year ago. Now, with 24 truckloads going out per month, SRS is getting rid of TRU at a rate that will allow the Site to meet the goal of removing all of this stored waste by 2006, compared to the original target date of 2034!! SRSRA sends congratulations to all those involved at SRS in making this tremendous achievement possible.

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## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

The Association's fiscal year runs from July through June. The data below summarizes financial activity FY to date.

Opening Balance (7/1/03)	\$12,654.22
Expenditures	\$860.23
Income	\$580.00
Closing Balance (10/31/03)	\$12,373.99

Expenditures are for board meeting room, annual meeting room deposit and Newsletter printing. All income is from membership dues

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## **Post-Retirement Employment Opportunity**

RCS Corporation (RCS) and Washington Group International (WGI) have formed a limited liability company based in Aiken, SC to provide a broad range of technical services. Global Energy Services (GES) was established to fill the need for both short and long-term staffing on specific projects where very unique and particular skill, experience or niche capability is needed. (Ed. Note: Global Engineering Services has been renamed Global Energy Services since our last Newsletter)

Global Energy Services employees will work on a variety of projects ranging from assignments in Moscow to the Savannah River Site. This includes all other Washington Group operating facilities, RCS and Washington Group projects both in the U.S. and internationally. For example, WGI is currently providing technical and project services for environmental cleanup, waste treatment and defense facility projects at several locations in Russia and the United Kingdom. Assignments range in duration from short-term review to full-time assignments encompassing two years for longer term projects.

**If you're interested in returning to work for domestic or foreign assignments, contact either Dan Curry (803)502-5719 or Carlos Garcia (803) 641-0100 ext 225 for further information.**

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## BC/BS Service Concerns

We have many letters from retirees trying to get proper Blue Cross/Blue Shield reimbursement for their medical bills. Many of the problems occur when the retiree/patient lives out-of-state (i.e., no longer in SC). If you have records of BC/BS service problems to share with SRSRA members, please send a letter outlining your case to:

**John Church, Benefits Committee**  
**SRS Retiree Association**  
**P. O. Box 5686**  
**Aiken, SC 29804**

You should also address specific complaints and concerns to Judy Merritt, the BC/BS liaison for WSRC/SRS.

**Judy A. Martin, Manager & Service Representative**  
**Major Group Marketing AX-330,**  
**BC/BS of South Carolina**  
**I-20 at Alpine Road**  
**Columbia, SC 29219**  
Telephone 1-800-288-2227, Ext.42205 or in-state 1-803-788-0222, Ext. 42205;  
email: [Judy.A.Martin@BCBSSC.com](mailto:Judy.A.Martin@BCBSSC.com) fax: 1-803-736-2851

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## Benefits Contacts

**People Support Service Center (a one-stop service for most HR and payroll activities and questions).**

- ◆ **803-725-7772 (local area SC and GA)**
- ◆ **800-368-7333 (long distance)**
- ◆ [service-center@srs.gov](mailto:service-center@srs.gov) (email contact for this new service)

### ◇ **Life, Health, Dental**

Becky Proveaux	PS Svc. Ctr. #
Rosalee Bennett	PS Svc. Ctr. #
Greg Murray	803-725-0531
Cindy McClintock	803-725-7004

### ◇ **Pension**

John Felkel	803-725-7722
Viola Best	803-725-1900

### ◇ **Internal Medicine Partners** 706-792-5075 (Annual Physical Examinations)

### ◇ **Metropolitan Life** 800-360-2747 (WSRC/BSRI SIP Funds Program)

### ◇ **Blue Cross/Blue Shield of SC**

1-800-325-6596  
[www.southcarolinablues.com](http://www.southcarolinablues.com)

Option 1 for Medical

Option 2 for Dental

Option 3 for Pre-Cert/Med Authorization

### ◇ **Value Options** (mental health & substance abuse assistance) 800-333-6557

### ◇ **BAC (Westinghouse Corporate Pension)** 800-581-4222

### ◇ **Safety Eyeglass Office**

Tom Cuny 803-725-3379

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**MEMBERSHIP**

**IT IS TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2003! PLEASE COMPLETE THE MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM BELOW AND RETURN WITH YOUR CHECK FOR YOUR 2003 MEMBERSHIP DUES. PLEASE REMIND OTHER RETIREES TO CONTACT RAY PERKS (TEL. 803-642-8654) TO GET ON THE MEMBERSHIP LIST.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I want to **RENEW** my membership in the SRSRA. (I am willing to serve on the Board of Directors. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No)

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I want to **JOIN** the SRS Retiree Association. (I would serve on the Board of Directors. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No)

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, **my SRS retired spouse** wants to **JOIN** the SRSRA. ( ...and would serve on the SRSRA BOD. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No)

**Annual Dues:    Year 2004**

\_\_\_\_\_ \$15 for Retiree

\_\_\_\_\_ \$0 for Retiree's Spouse (if also retired from SRS)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$5 for Retiree's Survivor Spouse

**Year 2005**

\_\_\_\_\_ \$15 for Retiree

\_\_\_\_\_ \$0 for Retiree's Spouse (if also retired from SRS)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$5 for Retiree's Survivor Spouse

SRS RETIREE NAME \_\_\_\_\_ SRS RETIRED SPOUSE'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

RETIREE RETIRED FROM: WSRC \_\_\_\_\_ BSRI \_\_\_\_\_ BWXT-SRC \_\_\_\_\_ BNFL-SRC \_\_\_\_\_ OTHER SRS \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE RETIRED FROM SRS: WSRC \_\_\_\_\_ BSRI \_\_\_\_\_ BWXT-SRC \_\_\_\_\_ BNFL-SRC \_\_\_\_\_ OTHER SRS \_\_\_\_\_

RETIREE DATE OF RETIREMENT \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

RETIREE'S SPOUSE DATE OF RETIREMENT \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Return to: **SRS Retiree Association    P. O. Box 5686    Aiken, S.C. 29804    Attn: Ray Perks**

Please help your membership committee locate recent retirees and other retirees who can help grow the membership and support the objectives of the SRS Retiree Association. The following is a list of recent retirees who should be invited to join the Association and contribute their support, plus their time and talent to the management of the group. If you are a friend of these persons please take a moment and ask them to join us. The membership form is shown above. Please give them a copy of the newsletter or we would be glad to send them a copy by email or regular mail.

--Ray Perks, Chairman, Membership Committee --

Gerald Bach  
Dorothy Barnes  
Brenda Bell  
Betty Bolen  
Royce Boone Jr.  
James Brosnahan  
Gisle Bryant  
Vonda Clerc  
Brent Daugherty  
Patricia Edey  
James Fallaw  
Samuel Ford

Joye Glaze  
Rhonda Green  
Lana Griffin  
Marcia Hall  
Gloria Hansen  
Monte Hawkins  
Daniel Hayward  
Cubby Heath  
Ron Hinds  
Rita Hitchler  
Emily Johnson  
Bhagwan Joshi

Vinson Lamb  
Wallace McCluggage  
D.C. Miller  
Kathy Moore  
Charles Morgan  
William Morgan  
Gary Mullis  
David Norred  
Frank O'Brien  
Arthur Odom  
George Owens  
Charles Pair

Carmen Provenzano  
Teresa Quarles  
Paul Shearer  
Jim F. Smith  
Art Stephen  
Donald Swindler  
Raam Vichare  
Oleen Witter  
Joanne Waldrop  
Steven Walling