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Your Connection

A Letter from the GSU-SUAA President

Dear Fellow SUAA Members,

As you know, these are dire times for pensioners in the state of Illinois. Powerful interests have decided to scapegoat the pensions as the problem causing the state’s financial woes. Addison Woodward has reported the situation in his article in this newsletter. I won’t repeat the details here. To read more about current legislation and SUAA’s positions visit the SUAA web site, www.suaa.org. The Membership Portal has user ID “Suaa” and password “Suaa432.”

Our main focus at GSU-SUAA this year has been to increase the membership. SUAA is an organization that, among other things, lobbies for our interests—the more members in SUAA, the louder its voice. Since September, we have added 39

new members to bring GSU’s total to 295. Thank you to Karl Harrison, Jay Lubinsky, and Addison Woodward for help with recruiting. Our goal is 300 by the June annual meeting. Take some time to recruit a retiree or GSU employee to SUAA. Membership costs less than \$3/mo., \$31 per year. If each of us recruits just one new member, we would double our size in just one year!

Also, please consider becoming more active in GSU-SUAA. There is work to be done that fits every interest and talent. Given the many legislative initiatives being floated regarding pensions, we particularly need people to be active in helping our representatives to understand our positions. Some other areas in

which SUAA needs help are planning events both educational and social, increasing membership, communicating with members and publishing the annual newsletter.

Perhaps you have an idea of something that SUAA could be doing that we have not identified. If so, please let us know. On the third Thursday of the month, there is either a meeting of the Executive Committee or one of the other GSU-SUAA committees. Notices are emailed. We welcome new faces and new ideas. If you can’t make a meeting but want to volunteer or make a suggestion, email me at jwells@govst.edu.

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Legislative Update by Addison Woodward

“**Fighting Back**” will be the theme of the annual meeting of the State University Annuity Association this June. Anyone following the headlines and editorials in the *Chicago Tribune* and other media outlets understands why we must fight back. The assault on public employees continues in Illinois and elsewhere.

There is some good news: Illinois passed an historic tax increase this January. Few anticipated an increase at that time, but the economic straits of Illinois were so dire that legislators and the Governor acted. The tax increase is temporary and expires in four years, just in time for a gubernatorial election. Already there is a huge deficit projected at the end of that time period. This then creates the context for continued discussions about changes (reductions in benefits) in the state’s pension systems.

The strategy employed by elected officials when dealing with

social issues, including our pensions, seems to be “divide and conquer.” That may be a harsh assessment, but if you reflect upon the new pension bill that was passed in March 2010, only employees hired after 12/31/10 were impacted. Current employees and retirees were not affected. But now possible revisions to the pensions of current employees are being proposed. For example, there is a bill which might make it out of committee that reduces the COLA to 3% or half of the CPI, whichever is less. There is another bill limiting the maximum pension for existing employees to \$106,800, an action that won’t impact many but which is a significant change, and yet another bill that would eliminate the tuition break given to children of current employees.

Finally, Speaker Madigan wants a constitutional amendment that would require a super majority in favor of any increase in retirement benefits. The intent of that amendment is clear. It would be

extremely difficult to restore a previous benefit once it had been taken away. All of these actions attempt to further divide employees who are already retired from those who are still working.

One of the most powerful lessons learned from Wisconsin this winter/spring is how all workers came together whether their rights were attacked by Governor Walker or not. You may remember that police and fire fighters’ unions were not the target of Governor Walker’s union busting actions. Walker targeted the unions of other public employees. However, police and firefighters were part of the huge public demonstrations. They realized that an attack on one group is an attack on all. That is something we must remember too, and that is why SUAA and current retirees are so engaged in the legislative process. We understand that an attack on the retirement security of current employees is an attack on all of us.

Letter from GSU-SUAA President (continued from page 1)

Thank you to this year’s chapter leadership. Leon Zalewski has served as the Past-President, Dale Max as the Treasurer, Lynne Hostetter as the Secretary, Nick Battaglia as web master, and Addison Woodward as our contact with SUAAAction. Addison represents GSU on a

statewide level serving on the SUAAAction board and the statewide SUAA Executive Committee. Thank you also to those of you who have attended one or more meetings and shared your ideas and suggestions. Finally, a little reminder—in June, President Maimon hosts

the annual SUAA luncheon. Look for your invitation in this newsletter. I hope to see you there.

Jane Wells
President
GSU-SUAA
jwells@govst.edu

Kid Care International, Inc.

Editor's note: Sandra Matteson, the wife of retired professor Dave Matteson (Psychology and Counseling), and her business partner, Karen Gunter, ran a successful company for a number of years providing in-home health care to children. In 2004 they were invited to Tanzania to visit an orphans' preschool. Kid Care International was created to respond to the incredible need they saw with respect to the health, nutrition and education of the children they met.

In 2004 three African Missionaries asked Karen and Sandra,

founders of Kid Care, to visit Golgotha Orphans Care Preschool in Arusha, Tanzania. Here they met a teacher and 52 orphaned children in a 10x10 school building that was no more than a stable.

The teacher's only tool was chalk. She wrote the ABC's and numbers on the slabs of wood that made up the walls of the school. All children ages three to seven were taught the same curriculum that included English.

The teacher had not been paid her salary of \$40 per month in over six months. The school had no water, electricity or toilets and was in a dangerous neighborhood. The children were not being fed, and it was hard for hungry children to concentrate on learning. Kid Care began sending money for the teacher's salary and food for the children. A better environment, a new school, and more teachers were desperately needed. Kid Care International was formed for the

Someone You Should Know

Richard (Dick) Lockhart is your SUAA lobbyist. He has served in that role for the last four years, and he is someone you should know.

Dick relishes telling anyone he is meeting for the first time that he is the oldest unindicted lobbyist in Illinois, having served as such for 52 years. He has represented a number of non-profit organizations including the Illinois School Psychologists Association, the Mental Health Association, the Retired Teachers Association of Chicago, Farm Credit Services and others.

Dick is a decorated war veteran. He fought in WWII and was a combatant in the Battle of the Bulge. He was captured by the Germans and was a prisoner of war. Several years ago he was

one of the feature interviews on Channel 11 when WWII was the focus.

If you are wondering just how old Dick is, let's just say his 85th birthday was several years ago. If you think he has slowed down, I defy anyone to try to keep up



with him as he walks from office to office and meeting to meeting. He walks as if on a mission, which he often is.

As you can imagine, Dick is well known by legislators, past and

present, and he has the respect of lawmakers, Governors and, of course, SUAA leadership.

His musings on the legislative process and the unpredictability of events are both wise and humorous. After all, he has been involved in this process for over half a century.

He repeatedly reminds SUAA leaders that "no person's life, liberty, property and pension are safe when the General Assembly is in session."

Dick believes that never before has the political environment been so toxic for the interests of community college and public university employees concerned about a secure retirement. And that is why he believes we must all be involved in fighting to preserve what we have.

SUAAction

SUAAction, the political involvement committee for the State University Annuitants Association, has begun its fundraising campaign for 2011. As you are undoubtedly aware, SUAAAction depends upon voluntary contributions from SUAA members who desire to support political action. Last year SUAA members across the state contributed \$151,902.

SUAAAction supported 162 candidates in the November election, contributing a total of \$129,183. Candidates were Democrats and Republicans, as

well as challengers and incumbents. SUAAAction contributed \$22,600 to winning Senate candidates and \$6,500 to losing candidates. In House races, SUAAAction contributed \$73,000 to the winners and \$14,600 to the losers.

Legislators are keenly aware of SUAA. This awareness is a result of the activities of the Executive Director and our lobbyist, the visibility and proximity of SUAA's state office to the Capitol, and the activities of our members, which include contacts with legislators, participation in campaigns, and attendance at various fundraisers.

SUAAAction is preparing right now for the 2012 elections, in which every representative and senate seat is up for re-election. We have a number of friends who may be vulnerable because they supported an income tax increase, and they will need our support.

Should you wish to make a contribution to SUAAAction, write a check payable to SUAAAction, indicate your chapter, and mail it to SUAAAction, P.O. Box 11023, Springfield, Illinois 62705-1770.

GSU Foundation Funds

The GSU Foundation has numerous funds that were established in memory of employees and friends of the university. We all know that GSU and its students are worthy of support. These individual funds allow us to honor a friend while at the same time doing some good for the students, faculty, and staff at GSU. This list is provided to assist you in making your annual charitable contributions. Funds established in memory of departed friends include:

Ron Brubaker Computer Science Memorial Fund

Burton Collins Scholarship

Dr. Judith Cooney Memorial Scholarship

Arthur Durant Scholarship in Addiction Studies

Lorraine Fontana Memorial Scholarship

Dr. Larry Freeman Memorial Scholarship

Mary Fronczak Memorial Scholarship

Dr. Wayne B. Hamilton Memorial Scholarship

Dr. Susan Kinsey Memorial Scholarship

William D. McGee Memorial Scholarship

Harry P. McHale Memorial Scholarship

Prince and Elsie McLemore Endowed Scholarship.

Ralph C. Medhurst Children's Fund

Cita V. Milbergs Memorial Scholarship

C. Edward Miller Memorial Fund

Dr. Joyce Mohberg Transition Award

Dr. Keith W. Smith Memorial Scholarship

Ralph and Delores Turner Scholarship

There are also two funds established in honor of living persons. These include:

The Community Service Scholarship in honor of Ron Bean

J. May Scholarship in Nursing - Scholarship in Advanced Nursing in honor of Judy Farah Franks.

Checks should be made payable to the GSU Foundation, but please write the name of the memorial on the memo line. Credit card donations are also acceptable. For more information and for questions you may have, please contact: Rosemary Hulett, Associate Vice President for Advancement and Alumni Relations, Governors State University, University Park, IL, 60484. Phone: 708.534.7892. Email: rhulett@govst.edu.

Woodward Presents at UIC Fall Forum on Illinois Pensions

Over 175 people heard Addison Woodward speak at the fall forum sponsored by the UIC chapter of SUAA. His PowerPoint presentation, "Illinois Pensions: Gold Plated Cadillac or Cadillac Clunker?" presented data on the Illinois pension systems, called into question the misleading generalizations made by the Chicago *Tribune* about pension recipients, raised concerns about the many unintended consequences of the new pension law, and concluded that Illinois pensions are not Gold Plated Cadillacs, but rather more like a used Ford Taurus, drivable but not luxurious. Woodward thought those affected by the new pension law would be getting the Cadillac clunker, a junk car.

Other panelists included Eden Martin of the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club, Ralph Martire from the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, and John McCarron of the Chicago *Tribune*. Eden Martin's theme was essentially that Illinois pensions are too generous, while Martire presented data suggesting that Illinois' pensions are quite average and that costs of those pensions to the state are less than if Illinois paid into social security. According to Martire, pension debt is a result of the state not making required pension payments when they were due. John McCarron commented on the three presentations.

In October, Woodward presented the same PowerPoint, with several additional slides at a

SUAA membership meeting at South Suburban College. He was invited by GSU's Sandi Kawanna, who is the President of the South Suburban SUAA chapter. His presentation helped stimulate a number of attendees to join the South Suburban SUAA chapter.

Woodward will make his presentation to the GSU audience on May 26 in the Hall of Honors at noon. If you are interested in attending, please call (708) 534-8043 or email Lynne Hostetter at LHostetter@govst.edu.

See additional information on page 6.

Kid Care (continued from page 3)

purpose of improving the health, nutrition and education of children between the ages of three and twelve worldwide.

In 2009 Kid Care purchased land and built the children a new school. There are currently 130 students divided into preschool, kindergarten, first and second grades. There are six licensed teachers, an experienced school administrator, and an active Board of Directors.

The combined salaries for the teachers and administrator are approximately \$600 per month.

Kid Care has started a **Teacher to Teacher Program** to help meet this important need. Without qualified, experienced teachers the children will not be educated.

The **Teacher to Teacher Program** is looking for active and retired teachers to support the monthly salaries by contributing \$15.00 per month. This can be in the form of an annual donation of \$180 or broken down anyway that is convenient for the donor. Remember, every penny goes to educate these orphaned children,

which gives them hope, a foundation for a better life, and a way out of poverty. If you would like to donate or find out more, please contact:

**Kid Care International
55919 Riverdale Drive
Elkhart, IN 46514**

Kid Care International is unique in that 100% of the donated funds go directly for the benefit of the children. Donations are tax deductible (501(c)3 charity org.) and are never used for administrative costs.

Mark these events on your calendar!

Annual Luncheon

The Annual SUAA Luncheon
sponsored by the President's Office
will be held on Thursday, June 30, from 12 noon to 2 pm.
at Governors State University
(Room location TBA)

A short business meeting will be held at 11 am with the luncheon to follow.
Please join us if possible.

All SUAA Members are invited to attend.

Please R.S.V.P. to Lynne Hostetter at (708) 534-8043 or email her at
LHostetter@govst.edu no later than June 23, 2011.

PowerPoint Presentation: "Illinois Pensions: Gold Plated Cadillac or Cadillac Clunker?" - Thursday, May 26, 12—1:30 p.m.

Addison Woodward will give a very interesting PowerPoint presentation on pension systems, calling into question the misleading generalizations made by the *Chicago Tribune* about pension recipients and raising concerns about the many unintended consequences of the new pension law. You will find

the points he makes very enlightening.

This well-received presentation was given as part of a forum sponsored by the University of Illinois-Chicago chapter of SUAA.

The presentation will be held on Thursday, May 26, 2011, from

12 noon to 1:30 p.m. in the Hall of Honors.

Please R.S.V.P. to Lynne Hostetter at (708) 534-8043 or email her at:

LHostetter@govst.edu

by Monday, May 23. We look forward to seeing you there.

We Will Miss . . .

We lost many good friends during the past year. Our sympathy goes out to their families. They're people who made a difference.

Virginia Bixby. Virginia retired from the College of Human Learning and Development, now called the College of Education. She created the college record system and managed it with skill and incredible attention to detail. After her retirement she was actively involved in GSU-SUAA as a director.

Mary Brown. Mary began working at GSU on February 5, 1997. She was an Admission and Records Officer in the Registrar's Office. Mary was named Employee of the Month in July 2002.

Brenda Chapman, a former member of the GSU staff. Brenda worked at GSU from 1980 to 2005 as staff secretary in the Science Division in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Leona Erickson. Leona began working at the GSU Library when it was in its infancy and retired in the early 90s. Many of the books in the Library you see today were labeled by her.

Mark Gayton. Mark began his career at GSU in 1984 as a press operator. He was promoted to Assistant Superintendent of the Print Shop in 1998 and became the Print Shop Superintendent in 2006. He was recognized as Employee of the Month in April of 1991.

Michael Mahoney. Michael served GSU as a Plant Operating Engineer from August 1974 to May 2005.

Brendan P. O'Rourke. Brendan began working at GSU in 1974 as Plant Operating Engineer. He was promoted in 1998 to Assistant Chief Plant Operating Engineer and retired in 2002.

Dorothy Pais. Dorothy worked in the GSU Library between August, 1979, and February, 1999,

when she retired as a Library Technical Assistant II.

Jacqueline Faye Jones Roberts. Jackie served GSU in several roles between 1998 and her retirement on December 31, 2009. She acted as an Admissions & Records Officer both in the Office of the Registrar and the Office of Admissions & Student Recruitment and became an Admissions & Records Supervisor in July 2006. Jackie received the Employee of the Month Award in June 1994 and August 2007.

Mildred Toberman. Mildred began working at GSU in 1970 for the College of Health Professions. Later, she worked in the College of Human Learning and Development before returning to CHP in 1979. In May 1993, she was named Employee of the Month. She retired in 1993.

[If we missed someone, please let us know; and we will ensure that they are mentioned in the next issue.]

Save a Tree

GSU SUAA has a goal of sending all communications by email alone. Please help us reach that goal. Send your email address to Lynne Hostetter at LHostetter@govst.edu. Thank you.

Dues Deduction

If you are not already paying your GSU-SUAA dues via dues deduction from your GSU paycheck or your SURS paycheck, please consider changing to that method. Dues deduction simplifies our record

keeping and saves you from writing a check year after year. The authorization form is available on our website, www.gsusuaa.com, on the state SUAA website, www.suaa.org, and on the [back page of this newsletter](#). Thanks for your help.

Also if you are a current employee using dues deduction at GSU, when you retire, you will need to complete a new authorization with SURS to continue paying your dues via dues deduction.

Your Retirement Security is in Peril

For office use only



Remove Head from Sand

Join SUAA to protect and preserve your retirement security.

SUAA is dedicated to protecting and preserving a strong public pension system, healthcare benefits, and the general well being of its members

State University Annuity Association (SUAA) Membership Application

Name (Print) _____
Last First Middle Initial

Address _____
Street City State ZIP

Email Address _____

Choose dues deduction (preferred*) or a check for \$31 for one-year's membership:

Current Employees:*

_____ I hereby authorize Governors State University to deduct \$1.30 from my pay each payroll period for my dues for membership in the State Universities Annuity Association (SUAA) and to remit said amount to the State Universities Annuity Association effective _____.

Retirees:*

_____ I hereby authorize SURS to deduct \$2.60 from my monthly pension check for my dues for membership in the State Universities Annuity Association (SUAA) and to remit said amount to the State Universities Annuity Association effective _____.

Employees or Retirees:

_____ Enclosed please find my check for \$31.00 for one year's membership in SUAA. (Check should be written to *GSU Chapter - State Universities Annuity Association.*)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

For current employees (the SUAA Office will take care of getting the signature from HR):

HR Representative: _____ Date: _____

Dues are not deductible for tax purposes, but are deductible as a business expense. Please return to Lynne Hostetter, c/o MILE at GSU.