2007 Big Ten Retirees Conference at Penn State -- Aug. 17-19

Each year, there is a conference of the Big 10 Retirees Association, composed of faculty/staff clubs of the universities in the Big 10. This annual conference is hosted by one of the Big 10 universities. Penn State has been involved in this annual conference since its inception at Ohio State University and has benefited from that meeting and all succeeding meetings since that time. Penn State hosted this conference for the first time in August of 1997. On August 17-19, 2007, Penn State will host this conference again. The 2007 program and presentations represent the product of considerable cooperative effort between the University’s Office of Human Resources and the Penn State Retired Faculty/Staff Club.

The primary site of the conference will be the Nittany Lion Inn. Delegates numbering between 20 and 30 are expected from the other Big 10 universities.

The theme of our conference will be “wellness” in all its forms: physical, emotional, and financial. Registration will occur on Friday afternoon, followed by a reception open to all delegates and members of the local Penn State Retired Faculty/Staff Club. A dinner for delegates, spouses and local club members (open by ticket) will follow the reception. The program Saturday will include speakers on various aspects of the wellness, lunch at the Village at Penn State, a bus tour around campus, dinner (open by ticket) and entertainment. The meeting will conclude on Sunday morning with another speaker, a business meeting and an opportunity for delegates to share ideas about how to improve their individual retiree organizations.

Please make plans to attend the reception on Friday evening. Further information about the program will be provided in the next few months.
Greetings From The President

Our Past President, Gifford Albright, and I attended the Big Ten Retirees Conference at Purdue University at West Lafayette, IN on August 25-27, 2006. The meeting was held on a weekend, Friday afternoon through Sunday morning at the Purdue Union Club. I was impressed with our hosts. They were highly organized and very friendly. The on-campus Union Club was nicely accommodating and the meeting rooms were close. We had talks of concern to retirees on Saturday morning and a four-hour tour of Purdue’s campus in the afternoon. Interestingly, Purdue has a retirement home called University Place associated with Purdue University, which is similar to the Penn State retirement home, The Village. On Saturday morning we heard a talk from the Executive Director of University Place and in the afternoon we visited the facility and toured some of the rooms. Penn State is host to the Annual Big Ten Retirees Conference in August 2007 so we paid particular attention to all the activities. On Saturday morning the spouses were invited to a demonstration by Hubert Schmieder, Purdue Chef Emeritus, entitled “Party Food Prepared by a Pro”. Our Saturday afternoon tour culminated with a visit and snacks at President Martin Jischke’s house. Business meetings took place on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

On Thursday, September 14 we held our annual chicken barbeque at Rock Springs. This year we celebrated club member Mrs. Ruth Dreipelbis’s birthday since she became 100 years old in early September. We believe she is our oldest current member but there are a number of members close behind.

Last October 9 the Penn State Benefits Office conducted its annual Benefits Fair. The Fair was nicely organized and well attended. The Penn State Retirees Faculty/Staff Club had a table for both the morning and afternoon sessions. We had a lot of visitors and many new persons joined our organization. Because of changes in our health coverage later this fall many people are interested in the programs and changes by the Benefits Office. On November 9 Robin Oswald and Devra Wolfe of the Penn State Office of Human Resources, Employee Benefits Division spoke to us about changes in the health coverage. As expected we had a full house for that meeting. In January the University Lobbyist, Rich DiEugenio gave a very informative talk about his lobbying activities on behalf of Penn State. Our program chair, Jim Rodgers, has lined up an impressive series of talks for our bimonthly meetings that you don’t want to miss.

In your service, 

Ralph Mumma
Club President 2005-2007
Count Me In!

_________  3 Years Dues (individual or couple) $15.00 [If your address label says 2007, your dues are due.]
_________  Donation to Retiree’s Assistance Fund
_________  Donation to Student Emergency Fund

☐  Total enclosed (Make checks payable to “The Penn State Retired Faculty/Staff Club”)

☐  Send an application form for a Retiree’s Assistance Fund grant

Name(s) _________________________________________________________________________
Address _________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Phone ____________________  E-mail  _______________________________________

Today’s Date ____________________  Retirement Year ___________________________

Mail to:  Penn State Retired Faculty/Staff Club
Office of Human Resources
120 S. Burrowes Street
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA  16801-3857

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT CENTER OPENS PROGRAMS TO PENN STATE RETIREES

Starting this month, Penn State’s retiree benefits package will expand to include a diverse variety of professional development opportunities offered through the Office of Human Resources’ Human Resource Development Center (HRDC).

“Education is a lifelong journey,” said Billie S. Willits, associate vice president for human resources. “By opening our development programs to this population, we hope to expand horizons even after our employees retire from the University.”

For more than 35 years, HRDC has been leading professional and organizational development at Penn State. HRDC and its affiliate partners help the University community to continually improve and enrich training and development programs across the Commonwealth. HRDC’s programs help learners to expand horizons and achieve success by enhancing knowledge, skills, and attitudes on a wide variety of topics.

“We’re very excited about including retirees in workshops with faculty and staff,” said Lenny Pollack, manager of human resource development for Penn State. “This arrangement allows different groups in the Penn State learning community to benefit from exchanging perspectives, insights, and ideas with each other. So this way, we can all learn from one another’s experiences.”

Below are just a few of the numerous upcoming HRDC programs that are open to Penn State retirees:

**Taking the Sting Out of Criticism**  
April 3  9:30 a.m. - noon  $83

**The Power of One: Applying Your Integrity and Values to Bring Out More of the Best in Yourself and Others**  
May 2  8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.  $83

**Creativity Power**  
May 23  10 a.m. - noon  $65

Retirees who would like additional information about programs, fees, and registration may call 814-865-8216 or email hrdc@psu.edu.
COLA Update

In the Spring 2006 National Edition of the Post-Script the lead story was about PA House Bill 2339, which proposed a two-tier cost of living adjustment (COLA) in 2006 - 2007 for retirees in the SERS and PSERS systems. That legislation never materialized and thus there is no COLA.

An organization that follows these legislative proceedings very closely is the PA Association of Retired State Employees (PARSE). PARSE gives an excellent discussion of the COLA situation in their Fall 2006 newsletter. It can be found on their web site at:  
www.parseofpa.org/newsletter/Fall2006/pensionfund.htm

The PARSE newsletter notes that part of the problem was “PA citizens are outraged with the legislature over their excessive benefits and their attempt in 2005 to give themselves an outrageous pay increase.” PARSE notes that many citizens see retiree COLAs as part of government greed. In 2006 this climate was not conducive to voting a COLA for retirees. But, as PARSE notes, more than 50 new legislators took office in Jan. 2007. This new group will be asked to reconsider the COLA.

Historically COLAs have been approved by the legislature every 4 or 5 years. The most recent COLAs were given in 1968, 1974, 1984, 1989, 1994, 1998 and 2002. PA is one of only 12 states that does not have an automatic yearly COLA.

The SERS fund has about a $30 billion investment portfolio and is financially well managed. The fund earned 14.5% last year, compared with a 7.55% national average. The pension fund is 93% funded, compared with a national average of 80%. However the fund does not cover COLAs. If they are approved by the legislature, the money must be supplied from outside the SERS fund. PARSE has always recommended that the pension fund pay for the COLAs instead of the PA taxpayer. Another shortcoming is that spouses of deceased retirees do not qualify for COLAs.

PARSE is hard at work and is determined to find a solution to the COLA problem. Many members of the PSU Retired Faculty/Staff Club are also members of PARSE. To find out how to join, go to the PARSE section on the Retired Faculty/Staff Club website:  
www.psu.edu/org/retfsclub
or to the PARSE web site at:  
www.parseofpa.org