

# **UAB RETIREES ASSOCIATION**

## **NEWSLETTER**

### **SUMMER, 2008**

**P. O. Box 55682  
Birmingham, AL 35255**

#### **YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE UABRA FALL MEETING TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9**

**1:00 – 3:00 p.m.**

**Homewood Library Auditorium  
1721 Oxmoor Road**

Many members have expressed concern about the state of the economy and the impact on their finances. Therefore, Chris J. Peterson, CFP of Peterson Financial, has been scheduled to speak to the UAB Retirees. His topic is "You're Retired, Now What? Will Your Money Last As Long As You Do?" Mr. Peterson is a Registered Principal offering securities and advisory services through FSC Securities Corporation, an SEC-registered investment advisor, and a registered broker-dealer member of FINRA and SIPC.

#### **AND MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR . . . HEALTHWISE AND FLU SHOTS THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23**

**1:00PM to 3:00PM**

**Homewood Library Auditorium <sup>Room 101</sup>  
1721 Oxmoor Road**

**→Be sure to call for reservations  
and bring your PEEHIP card!**

**One of the benefits of being a member of UABRA is the health screening and free flu shots for UAB retirees and spouses.**

The UAB Retirees Association, in cooperation with the Jefferson County Health Department, will present a program called HealthWise. This program provides screening for potential health problems, makes referrals to the medical community, and provides education about preventive guidelines. This program is provided without charge to UAB retirees and spouses who are covered by PEEHIP, BCBS Group #14,000, HealthSpring, Viva, or Southland Supplemental Insurance. As a requirement of eligibility for this program, retirees and/or spouses must provide proof of health insurance coverage by **presenting your PEEHIP insurance card.**

The program will provide health screening, which consists of a blood pressure check, pulse rate, total cholesterol and HDL (good cholesterol) levels, and osteoporosis screening. A nurse will review the results of the screenings with the participant and make recommendations for positive lifestyle changes. A "take home" colorectal cancer screening test will also be provided to participants that are at

have a family history of colon cancer). If the screening results indicate a need for further evaluation, referral to a physician may be given.

For the free flu shots for UAB Retirees and spouses, please **call (205) 930-1491 to make a reservation** and so they will know how many shots to bring.

## ***MESSAGE FROM THE UABRA PRESIDENT***

The UAB Retiree Association is an independent, self governing membership organization, the purpose of which primarily is to serve and promote the interest and welfare of persons retired from the faculty and staff of the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) and, secondarily, to support the institutional goals of UAB. To these ends, the association will communicate, lobby, and cooperate with representatives of UAB, governments, other groups, and the general public to further and protect the interests of the members of the Association.

Membership in UABRA is open to all persons retired from the faculty and staff of UAB, including University Hospital, as well as the spouses, widows and widowers of retired persons. Those nearing retirement and friends of UABRA may join as associate members with all privileges and rights except voting.

The stimulus to form UABRA five years ago was the threatened loss of

2

our State Retirement System benefits and our PEEHIP insurance. Because of our successful organization and lobbying efforts combined with the lobbying of our parent organization, AERA (Alabama Education Retirees Association), we were successful in defeating these proposals by the governor and the legislature. Only because we had the numbers (read this as YOU, the voters) did we get the attention of the governor and the legislature with good results. Such activity also produced cost of living adjustments (COLAs) from the legislature of 4% in 2005 and 7% in 2006. There was no COLA in 2007; a formula driven 13<sup>th</sup> check was given to retirees in December 2007 instead of a COLA. Please remember that every year the legislature has to renew all COLAs that have been approved in the past. If they do not approve them every year, they will be lost, and your retirement check could go back to the level established when you retired. We cannot let this happen!!

As you can see from reading the above information, we need all retirees from UAB to join UABRA and AERA. So if you have any friends who have retired from UAB but are not members of UABRA, please urge them to join. A membership application is enclosed with this newsletter. We need to impress the governor and legislature with our numbers (voters) to attain our goals of protecting our retirement funds, PEEHIP and attaining COLAS.

*Alan R. Dimick, M.D.*  
*UABRA President*

## **ANNUAL MEETING HELD JUNE 24**

Approximately 100 UABRA members gathered June 24 for our annual meeting at the Homewood Library Auditorium. The featured speaker was Jay M. McDonald, M.D., Professor and Chair of the UAB Department of Pathology and Director of the UAB Center for Metabolic Bone Disease. Dr McDonald is also Editor-in-Chief of *The American Journal of Pathology*.



He shared interesting and enlightening information on bone health for an aging population. His research with NASA has been on the accelerated aging of the bones of astronauts due to a gravity-less environment. A humorous comparison of Columbus discovering America and the idea of a mission to Mars entertained the crowd.

Cathy Newhouse, Administrative Director of UAB Rehabilitation Services, also spoke on Wii systems and the way the systems are used to help patients recover and regain physical and cognitive functions. The UAB Spain Rehabilitation Center sees approximately 2,000 patients per year who have suffered a stroke or other

trauma that affects their physical and cognitive abilities.



The center is purchasing these systems for the patients (*see article below about UABRA's help with this*).

Janice Charlesworth, Executive Secretary of the Alabama Education Retirees Association (AERA) installed the officers of the Board of Directors of UABRA for 2008-2009, and reported that Rebecca Bradley is serving on the AERA Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) Committee. The goal of the COLA Committee is to have a plan in place to present to the members this fall, including a bill that will be introduced during the 2009 Legislative session.

### **UABRA TO SUPPORT SPAIN REHAB WITH WII SYSTEMS**

Cathy Newhouse was a presenter at the annual UABRA meeting in June and shared how successful the Wii systems have been for patient therapy at UAB's Spain Rehabilitation Center. As a community service project, the UABRA Board of Directors voted to obtain some Wii

systems for Spain Rehab. Four basic systems have been purchased at a considerable discount. Kay Moore is working to identify companies that may donate equipment or provide discounts for the systems so that we can provide as much software and equipment for the patients as possible.

If any UABRA member has any contacts with a business or individual that could assist us, please contact Kay Moore at (205) 213-9408.

### ***UABRA OFFICERS AND BOARD FOR 2008-2009***



Officers for 2008-2009 were installed at the June meeting by Janice Charlesworth, Executive Director of the Alabama Education Retirees Association (AERA). Pictured, left to right, are: Erma Wesley, John Gillespie, Alan Dimick, Bill Moates, Kitty Robinson, Rebecca Bradley, and Janice Charlesworth.

Denny Bearce and Sandra Dillon completed a 3-year board term and rotated off the board in June. Special thanks to them for their service and commitment to UABRA.

### **Elected by the membership to serve on the Board of Directors are:**

#### **3 year Term Ending 2009**

Rebecca Bradley  
Alan Dimick  
Kay Moore  
Garvin Phillips  
Erma Wesley

#### **3 Year Term Ending 2010**

Bobbie Burkhart  
Virginia Gauld  
John Gillespie  
Bill Moates  
Kitty Robinson

#### **3 year Term Ending 2011**

John Byrd  
Jackson A. Como  
Marilyn Doss  
Carol Medders  
Cecil Nepomuceno

### **Officers are:**

President - Alan R. Dimick, M. D.  
Vice President - Bill Moates  
Recording Secretary - Rebecca L. Bradley  
Membership Secretary - Erma R. Wesley  
Corresponding Secretary - Virginia D. Gauld, Ph.D.  
Treasurer - Kitty Robinson  
Immediate Past President - Jack Bradford, Ph.D.

### **Committee Chairpersons are:**

Nominating - Cecil Nepomuceno  
Legislative - Bill Moates  
Outreach - Cecil Nepomuceno  
Finance - Kitty Robinson  
Communication - Kay Moore  
Newsletter - Carol Medders  
Website - John Gillespie

## **MEMBERSHIP INCREASES**

Since our annual UABRA meeting in June, we are pleased to welcome 56 retirees and 21 spouses as new members of UABRA! They bring our current total membership to 1,005 (733 retirees and 272 spouses). Thanks to the 263 members who have renewed their membership for this next year. If you have not yet submitted your renewal, please complete the membership application included with this newsletter and submit it, preferably by August 15th. Be sure to include your e-mail address so that we can communicate quickly and at no cost to the association. If you are one of those who has already renewed, please share the application with a UAB retiree who has not yet joined. And please notify us whenever you change your e-mail address so that we can keep in touch with you.

*Erma Wesley*  
*UABRA Membership Secretary*

## **MESSAGE FROM THE UABRA IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT**

*Jack Bradford, the first president of UABRA and now Immediate Past President on the Board of Directors, is serving as Parliamentarian to the AERA and on the Ad Hoc COLA Committee. Not only does he represent us well, he keeps us informed about what is going on and the issues that are being addressed!*

## **Could a regular Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) ever be in our future?**

Last year Joe McFerrin, then President of AERA and now Immediate Past President, appointed an Ad Hoc COLA Committee. Chaired by Joe McFerrin, this group of AERA members and select legislators will be meeting soon. The topic of that meeting was revealed in a questionnaire sent to AERA Unit Presidents statewide. The questionnaire asked if we should pursue legislation seeking an automatic COLA for retirees. As a member of this committee, I will be among those AERA members who will be meeting with legislators to begin discussion. Some states have an automatic Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), somewhat fashioned after what happens with Social Security each year. It is expected that the State Retirement System and possibly legislators will counter that the state and indeed the nation is experiencing financial hardship. This is exactly when those who have smaller retirement benefits need the most help.

We need to stop at once the war between K-12 and higher education. The battle is non-productive and is giving all of education a black eye. An example of how non-productive this has become was the most recent legislative session. A filibuster caused the regular session to go into a special session and resulted in a cost to taxpayers of roughly a quarter of a million dollars!

We have a fine medical program which has connected to it one of the best pharmaceutical plans in the nation. We do not want to lose that. We do not pay state taxes on our state retirement. We do not pay state taxes on our Social Security checks. We do not want to lose these either. Our retirement fund is about 83% funded. There are reasons for this not being 100% funded. One reason was the failure of a few key companies in the past, another has been the performance of the stock market, yet another was a change in the manner in which COLAS are funded, so now our own COLAS are a part of the cause. Lastly, our retirement system has made some investments that were very good for the State of Alabama but not very good for retirees. These include the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail Courses, their associated hotels, other hotels and civic centers, the remodeling of the Old Supreme Court Building, low interest loans to companies, and others. These admittedly contribute to future tax revenues which will help the Education Trust Fund but will fail to directly help retirees. All of this and more will have to "go on the table" along with some real brainstorming on how to fund our COLAs for the future. If you have some great suggestions, please go to the UABRA website ([www.uabra.org](http://www.uabra.org)), click on board members, and then e-mail your comments to any member.

*Jack Bradford, Ph.D.  
UABRA Immediate Past President  
AERA Parliamentarian  
Ad Hoc COLA Committee*

## **MESSAGE FROM THE UABRA VICE PRESIDENT**

### **Impending Crisis for Retirees**

A recent article in the July 19, 2008, issue of *The Birmingham News* ("State's Benefit Cost Set to Soar") points to a severe shortfall in future state revenues to adequately support pensions and health insurance for active teachers and retired teachers and other public employees. The legislature will have to make difficult and unpopular decisions to find more money for the General Fund and the Education Trust Fund.

These are scary times for us retirees since we're often looked upon as a drag on the system!

As dismal a situation as this is now facing us, all is not lost. We (me, you, and future UAB retirees) can help find a solution to this crisis. The constant threat we now experience to shrink or do away with certain retiree benefits as cost-cutting measures are sought and will perhaps become even more intense. Let's face it. There are some in our state legislature that just don't like and refuse to support education for whatever reasons. But by joining forces with other retiree groups (University and K-12), we can become a viable and focused voice that will not be ignored by our state representatives and senators. We cannot idly stand by while they make life-altering decisions concerning our benefits.

To join with other forces, start by becoming a member of UABRA. Also, and this is very important, become a member of the Alabama Education Retirees Association (AERA). There is strength in numbers at both local and state levels, and combined we can make an impact on the legislature's decision-making process. You receive vital information published in *The AERA Voice!* regarding upcoming House and Senate bills and other issues specific to the welfare of all retirees.

Oftentimes, legislators say they support education concerns but change their position when they think their constituency won't notice. AERA reveals those legislators by name and photograph. It is necessary to know whether the person you helped elect to office with your vote is consistently working for or against you.

It should be pointed out that it is AERA's policy not to endorse one candidate or party over another at election time. However, the new Local Unit Survey of Legislative Issues for the 2009 Legislative Session as drafted by the AERA State Legislative Committee asks our membership if it is time to change that policy. The survey deals with Action Issues and Legislative Issues. The third Legislative Issue asks the following question: "Would you support the proposal that AERA become more involved politically by training members to become active participants in the election of candidates who support public education?"

You are urged to respond to a more detailed and individualized legislative survey that will appear in the July/August issue of *The AERA Voice!* Your response to this survey will be the first step toward a solution to avert an impending crisis for retirees.

*Bill Moates*  
*UABRA Vice President*  
*Member, AERA State Legislative*  
*Committee*

## **JOIN THE ALABAMA EDUCATION RETIREES ASSOCIATION (AERA)**

Out of the approximately 64,000 benefit checks sent each month to retirees, only about 24,500 belong to AERA – about 40,000 don't! As you have read in other articles, there are funding issues related to our PEEHIP benefits and COLAs. So if you are one of the 40,000 who don't belong, now would be a good time to join. Help protect your benefits! For more information, go to <http://www.aerainc.org> and click the Membership link or call toll-free 1-800-537-6867 or (334) 262-4177. Dues are currently only \$10.93 a month and can be paid by payroll deduction. This is a small price to pay for the protection and enhancement of our benefits! Plus there are many other benefits and services available to members of AERA!

### **UABRA WEBSITE**

Visit the UABRA Website for more information on your organization:

[www.uabra.org](http://www.uabra.org)

**PEEHIP  
OPEN ENROLLMENT  
DEADLINE –  
A REMINDER!**

All retirees should have received a packet with information about the PEEHIP insurance plans. The Open Enrollment deadline to change any coverage through PEEHIP is **August 31**. There is a new website – [www.rsa-al.gov](http://www.rsa-al.gov). You can create an online account, review your current coverage, and even make online changes until September 10. You do not have to do anything if you are not making any changes to your coverage. The only exception to this is a mandatory requirement of annual enrollment for those qualifying for the Federal Poverty Level Assistance (FPL) or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

Also, if you are 65 or older, you must have Medicare Part B in place at the time of your retirement to have adequate coverage. PEEHIP participants do NOT need the Medicare Part D Prescription Plan since prescription coverage is included with PEEHIP.

**MEMBERSHIP  
APPLICATION**

If you have already renewed your membership for 2008-2009, please share the membership application included with this newsletter with a UAB Retiree friend who needs to join!

**TAX TIP:  
PAYING LONG-TERM  
CARE INSURANCE  
PREMIUMS AS A GIFT**

Most of you are aware that premiums paid for your qualified Long-term Care insurance policy may be eligible for a deduction on your federal income tax return. But did you know that you may be eligible for a deduction on Long-term Care insurance premiums paid for someone else?

Normally an annual gift of more than \$12,000 to a single individual (\$24,000 limit for a joint gift from husband and wife) is taxable under the Federal Gift Tax law. However, Long-term Care insurance premiums paid on behalf of anyone else do not count toward that limit. The premiums are subject to "age-based limits" – the same limits that your own Long Term Care insurance premiums are subject to. So as long as the premium payments don't exceed the age-based limits, they may be deductible. Of course, anything above the age-based limit would count against the annual exclusion.

Don't you think that helping an adult child secure their financial future with Long-term Care insurance is a great gift idea?

*Printed with permission from  
Steve Van Gilder, Senior Long Term  
Care Insurance Specialist*

The above information is provided for general use. It was not written for use by any taxpayer to avoid any IRS tax or penalty. Tax laws and IRS administrative positions may change and it is important to consult your own tax preparer and financial adviser regarding what defines a "qualified" LTCi policy and "age-based limits" and how this information can apply to your particular circumstances (IRC §213(d)(1)(D), Reg §25.2503-6).



## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY AT UAB: UAB BLOOD DRIVE**

*In each newsletter we plan to provide information on a volunteer opportunity at UAB. Featured in this issue is the UAB Blood Drive. If you know of other volunteer opportunities for UAB Retirees, please contact Carol Medders, UABRA Newsletter Editor, via the UABRA website.*

The UAB Medical Center Team Spirit Blood Drive is scheduled for Tuesday, September 2, from 12:00 noon to 11:30 p.m. as well as Wednesday, September 3, Thursday, September 4, and Friday, September 5 from 7:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. each day. The drive will be held at the UAB Hospital North Pavilion in the 2nd floor Atrium. The goal for this drive is at least 200 donors per day – 1,000 donors are needed to meet the productive goal.

All donors will receive a golf pass for a free round of golf at any of the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail courses (except for Ross Bridge and Lakewood)! Food, fun, prizes, and drawings abound during this Labor Day week drive. Also, the UAB TouchPoints program provides nice gifts to donors who make their donations at UAB. See [www.uabtouchpoints.org/home.php](http://www.uabtouchpoints.org/home.php) for information on qualifying gifts after at least 5 donations/50,000 points; a great weekend getaway package is available by redeeming 120,000 points as a result of 12 complete donations.

The new UAB-American Red Cross Blood Center located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the North Pavilion will be open that week as well. Appointments can be made for the donor room during this week and also at any other times throughout the year.

Volunteers are needed to help staff registration, the canteen (providing refreshments to the donors), etc. during the September blood drive as well as future blood drives in January, April and July. Volunteers can also work in the donor room throughout the year and can help with donor recruitment, scheduling, media/publicity, etc.

If you would like to work at the UAB-American Red Cross Blood Drives or work during the year in the donor room, please call Ann Smith at the UAB-Red Cross Blood Center Donor Room at (205) 996-9851 or 996-7377 or e-mail Ann at [SmithAnnT@usa.redcross.org](mailto:SmithAnnT@usa.redcross.org).

Give blood so that UAB has enough blood to meet patient needs and can eliminate blood shortages. The UAB Campus and Medical center employees, retirees, and students as well as your family and friends can and do make a difference!

**TO CONTACT YOUR STATE  
HOUSE AND SENATE  
REPRESENTATIVES IN THE  
STATE LEGISLATURE, GO  
TO:**

**[www.legislature.state.al.us](http://www.legislature.state.al.us)**