

GSRA Day at the Capitol, Feb 5, 2020

GSRA is busy making final arrangements for its annual *GSRA Day at the Capitol* and *GSRA-GPHSA Legislative Reception*. Please mark your calendars now and make plans to join us in Atlanta on February 5th for these events. You do not want to miss this opportunity to make our voices heard to members of the General Assembly. The success of both events will depend entirely on informed GSRA member participation.

We will meet at the Capitol the morning of the 5th and end that evening in the Empire Room of the Floyd Building from 5:00 – 7:00 pm. It's more important than ever for active & retired State Employees and Educators to get involved and participate toward attaining our Goals while preserving the retirement benefits we earned. If you're undecided, reach out to Members who have attended before who can attest to the impression GSRA makes when a large, enthusiastic group is present to call on legislators and show up to relevant committee meetings that day. The evening reception provides a relaxed environment for the legislators to socialize with members/constituents while addressing concerns one on one. The reception, enhanced with heavy hors d'oeuvres and beverages, will feature an Awards ceremony to present the *GSRA Legislative Service Award*.

Your GSRA Board has tried to make it as easy as possible for members to attend both events. Our out of town members can take advantage of special discounted rates at the conveniently close **Courtyard Atlanta Decatur Downtown/Emory for \$164 per night**. [Book your group rate for Georgia Professional Human Service Association](#). The fee for the Reception is \$37 per person.

The official announcement and details of both events are on our web page and will be sent out soon providing instructions for registering, details about GSRA's 2020 Legislative goals, lodging, parking, directions ~ all the

information you need to help make both events our best ever.

In the meantime:

1. Contact your local legislators and thank them for what they've done in the past especially the last two years (personal visit, calls, cards, emails).
2. Invite and Encourage legislators to join us on February 5th at the Legislative Reception from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm in the Empire Room on the 20th Floor of the Floyd Building.
3. Give your legislators a copy of our Goals and Objectives for the coming year briefly explain why this is important to you.

Announcement and Online Registration

Details and online registration coming soon!

Mail-in Registration Form is included in this newsletter

Macon Local Chapter Forges Ahead

Despite being the newest local chapter, the Macon Middle Georgia chapter is forging ahead with ambitious membership drives in the middle Georgia area – drives which are proving to be very successful.

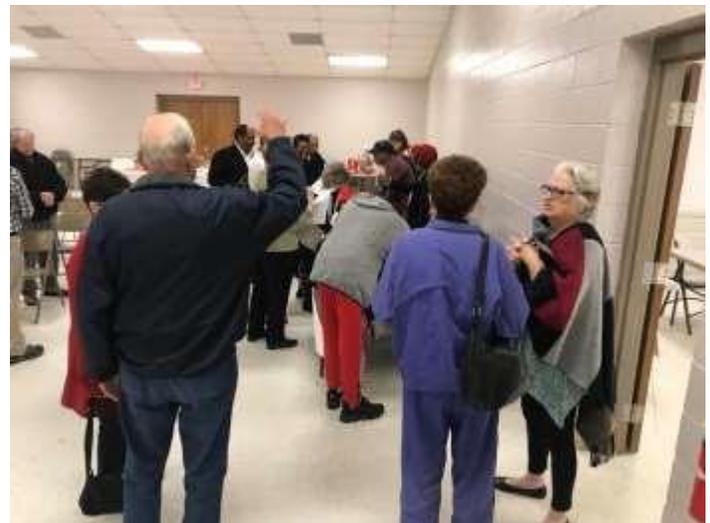
Macon Middle Georgia Chapter held membership drives in Jones County on November 18th and Baldwin County on December 4th. The Jones drive yielded four new members on the spot and promises for future members. In Baldwin, the chapter had a meeting, breakfast and membership drive that was very successful. The chapter invited three representatives, and all three attended (Miriam Paris- Macon, Rick Williams- Milledgeville, and Dr. James Beverly-Macon). The chapter greeted 45 retirees with breakfast and a membership drive along with the chance to talk with their representatives. They welcomed 11 new members who joined that day. The membership chairman shared with the group how important each of them are and how the membership is the heart of the chapter. Bob Pollock, SW Georgia Local Chapter President, attended the meeting and gave the new members an overview of the work that GSRA has accomplished in the last couple of years. The chapter elected a new slate of officers: President – Clayton Teague, Vice President- William Lucas; Secretary- Jan Mc Millan; Treasurer- Bobbie Jo Carver; Membership Chairman- Melissa Belk Teague and thanked the 2019 officers for their service (Mary Brooks, Sheilah Feagin, Richard Guerreiro, Melissa Belk, Bobbie Jo Carver and Susan Joanis).

There were members from surrounding counties that attended the meeting and the chapter will look at adding those counties in 2020. The chapter has decided to expand its reach and not deny anyone a chance to be a member of a local chapter. The meeting closed with a reminder for the members to continue to reach out to your ex-coworkers and tell them about GSRA and to be careful not to let your membership expire. Think about doing pension deduction, only \$1.67 a month. Membership will be the chapter's focus for 2020. Most members left with applications to take to their fellow state retired friends and acquaintances.

Membership matters, join today! Looking for a local chapter or have any questions email Melissa Belk Teague at melissabelk@maconmiddlegeorgiagsra.com



Mary Wimberly, Melissa Belk, Ralph Merrow and Brenda Riggins



Baldwin County membership drive



Jim's View: Time to Reflect

It's time to turn the calendar from 2019 to 2020. It is also a time for us to reflect on what we as an organization accomplished and did not accomplish during 2019 and also to plan for what we want to accomplish in 2020.

In 2019, we were able to meet with Governor Kemp (once), many of his key advisors (multiple times), and several legislators (including addressing both the Senate and House Retirement Committees). We were also able to address the ERS Board (as well as individual members of the ERS Board) and provided them with true stories of the adverse impact the lack of a cost of living adjustments (COLAs) has had and continues to have on retired state employees. I want to thank Chuck Clay, Chuck Freedman, and Joseph Drolet for their willingness to join me in those meetings. While we were not successful in having the COLAs restored in 2019, we are confident that our efforts in 2019 have raised the profile of GSRA and increased the awareness of our issues in the Governor's Office and in the General Assembly.

As a result of those efforts, we have identified several legislators who have expressed an interest in helping GSRA achieve its goals. We have begun to work with those legislators to formulate a plan for achieving our goals during the 2020 legislative session.

2020 is an election year. All members of the Georgia General Assembly have to stand for re-election this year. GSRA will be sending a questionnaire to each senator and representative to gauge their support of GSRA, retired and active state employees, and their support of having annual COLAs for all retired state employees restored in 2020. We

will publish the questionnaire results (including those that did not respond) in our newsletter. We hope that you will use the results of the questionnaire when you have an opportunity to interact with your representative and/or senator, as well as when you enter the voting booth in 2020. I would be remiss if I did not mention one of our top achievements for 2019. Through the hard work of Chuck Freedman, Chuck Clay, and Joseph Drolet, among others, the GSRA Board was able to finalize a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the ERS. Several of the deliverables in the MOU have been completed and we are assessing their effectiveness. We will be meeting with representatives of the ERS to discuss the results of the MOU and how we can improve the effectiveness of the MOU.

2020 is also the year when the Department of Community Health (DCH) plans to send out a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the State Health Benefit Plan (including Medicare Advantage Plans). We can expect that there will be some changes to State Health Benefit Plans. As a result of our request to have input into the development of the RFP, we have held the first of what we expect to be a series of meetings with DCH to discuss the RFP. I want to thank Commissioner Berry and his staff for their willingness to meet with GSRA representatives on this very important issue as well as other issues relating to the State Health Benefit Plan.

In closing, I want to thank you for your support of GSRA in 2019. I know that I can count on your continuing support in 2020. Happy New Year!!

Jim

Local Chapter News

Athens/Northeast Georgia

The Athens Chapter held a December meeting and officially changed its name to the Northeast Georgia Chapter effective immediately. Officers were elected and are as follows: President-Kip Mann, President-Elect-Glenda Bullard, Treasurer-Frank Johnson, Secretary-Cheryl Johnson,

Membership-Carolyn Allen, and Legislative Contact-Andrea Smith.

Counties from which GSRA members may choose to join our chapter include: Banks, Barrow, Clarke, Dawson, Elbert, Franklin, Greene, Habersham, Hall, Hart, Jackson, Lumpkin, Madison, Morgan, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Rabun,

Stephens, Towns, Union, Walton, and White. Minutes of the meeting will be forthcoming from our Secretary Cheryl Johnson. Updated By-Laws and an updated budget will be submitted to accommodate our expansion. Frank Johnson will be submitting items for reimbursement to Harold Grindle.

It is the intent of the officers of this chapter to move the meetings of the chapter around the area to encourage participation. Our next meeting is scheduled for either Toccoa or Lavonia for February 2020 when we will celebrate our next one-time adjustment.

Thanks to all who worked hard to make this event possible. Especially, Carolyn Allen, and Jane Mann



Attendees at the Northeast Georgia December meeting

Central Metro

Central Metro had a great December meeting with a presentation by Malcolm Wills, with BH Technology Group, which some members may remember from the vendor section at the Annual Meeting. Mr. Wills' presentation was on using iPhones and android phones and was very well received.



Malcolm Wills addresses Central Metro meeting

East Metro

The East Metro local chapter held a December meeting and the featured presenter was Malcolm Wills with BH Technology Group, which was also represented in the vendor section of the Annual Meeting in October. Mr. Wills provided members with a class on using iPhones and android phones.



East Metro members listen to Malcolm Wills' presentation

Savannah Coastal

The Savannah Coastal Chapter held its Holiday Potluck Luncheon on December 6, and John Lengnick of AMBA graciously picked up the tab for the entree of fried and baked chicken. While not an overwhelming turnout, those members who came were enthusiastically in the spirit and

hungry. John provided us with an overview of the many different benefits that AMBA offers our members - everything from LTC, dental and vision insurance to discounts on electronics and travel. Thanks to John, AMBA, and the twenty some members who came and made it a successful meeting.



John Lengnick presents AMBA information to Savannah Coastal

Don't Forget the 2nd ERS 3% Payment!

Per the ERS website, two one-time, non-compounded payments for eligible ERS retirees/beneficiaries was approved during the 2019 session, with the first being paid the first week of August, 2019. **Now, the second is scheduled to be paid the first week of February, 2020.**

To see the eligibility requirements [click here](#).

Information Alert!

ALERT! Although recent mail and email communications from AMBA/GSRA market Supplemental Medicare Insurance Policies to GSRA members as an insurance benefit, any member that is enrolled in the State Health Benefit Plan should not enroll in a Non-SHBP Supplemental Medicare Insurance Policy.

The SHBP provides medical insurance to retirees who are over the age of 65 through a Medicare Advantage (MA) Option. One of the conditions required by the federal Medicare program is that an MA enrollee cannot "double-up" and subscribe to what is referred to as a Supplemental Medicare Insurance Plan or a Medicare Part D Plan (prescription drugs) or other (non-SHBP) Medicare option. See page 16 of your 2020 SHBP Retiree Decision Guide for statements about the consequences of enrolling in such a non-SHBP plan. That consequence is that the SHBP will terminate an individual's MA option under the SHBP and transfer the member to an option offered to the under age 65 SHBP members – WITHOUT any subsidy in premium.

AMBA is an organization that offers various benefits to members of associations such as GSRA. Not all medical/health benefits that are offered by AMBA are applicable to be added to benefits offered by the SHBP. You should always rely on the SHBP information about health insurance options.

GSRA

Opportunity to Participate in a Study!

Judith Small-Benn-Wright is a present employee of the Department of Revenue and a PhD student with Walden University. For her dissertation entitled “The possible long-term effects of the austerity measures, which were introduced during the Great Recession, on the lives of state public servants”, she is looking for 15 volunteers to respond who were employed from at least 2005 and who retired in 2017 to the present time.

The purpose of the study is to explore the perceived effects of recession-era austerity measures on the Public Service Motivation (PSM) of public employees. Such austerity measures include furlough days, the increased costs of non-wage benefits, and merit increase freezes. Links to her “Introductory Letter”, “Consent Form”, and “Interview Questions” are on the home page of the GSRA Website; www.mygsra.com. Her email address is: judith.small-benn@waldenu.edu.



Donate to GSRA Legal Fund

GSRA’s Legal Fund was established as a dedicated legal fund in the event that leadership, on behalf of its members, ever has to retain legal counsel. The fund will be used to cover all appropriate legal fees related to ensuring that retiree benefits are not reduced or eliminated.

Every donation makes a difference. For more information and to donate to this fund click on the link below.

[GSRA Legal Fund](#)

Happy New Year!



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Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield is an LPPD plan with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield depends on contract renewal. Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield is the trade name of Blue Cross Blue Shield Healthcare Plan of Georgia, Inc. Independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. ANTHEM is a registered trademark of Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc.

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- MASA (Air and Ground Ambulance Plan)
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- Accident Policy
- Medicare Supplement Policy
- Easy Issue Life Policy
- Hearing Benefits
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myambabenefits.info/gsra

GEORGIA STATE RETIREES ASSOCIATION



Here at APCU, Your **FAMILY** is our family.

Since 1925, we've prided ourselves on helping our members build a solid financial foundation for their own families. With APCU's Online Member Referral program, you can receive \$25 for every family member you refer to APCU.

That's right! When a family member you refer to APCU opens a new membership with a \$100 deposit, we will not only deposit a \$25 bonus into your family member's new account, but we will also deposit a \$25 bonus into your APCU account!

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 OR
JILL WILCOX
 jwilcox@apcu.com • (404) 684-8084



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GEORGIA STATE RETIREES ASSOCIATION

REGISTRATION FORM – **RETURN BY 1/31/2020**

GSRA MEMBERS CAN REGISTER ONLINE WITH A CREDIT CARD – NON-MEMBERS MUST COMPLETE AND MAIL IN THIS FORM WITH PAYMENT TO REGISTER FOR RECEPTION.

PLEASE COMPLETE ONE FORM PER PERSON - INDICATE PARTICIPATION IN EACH EVENT.

GSRA DAY AT THE CAPITOL – February 5, 2020 – 10 am Room 406 CLOB

Photo Opp. With Governor Kemp to be announced later!

There is no fee for participation with GSRA Day at the Capitol! Please send a message to help@mygsra.com if you plan to deliver GSRA Swag Bags to your Legislator's Offices!

*I plan to participate in GSRA Day at the Capitol: **YES NO** (Circle Answer) I Will visit the following Senators'/Representatives' Offices:*

GSRA/GPHSA LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION – February 5, 2020

EMPIRE ROOM - FLOYD BUILDING - 5:00PM TO 7:00PM

Registration fee of \$37 is required to attend the Legislative Reception

NAME _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY, COUNTY, STATE, ZIP _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

PHONE NUMBER (BEST TO BE REACHED) _____

GSRA CHAPTER NAME _____

Georgia Senate District# or Senator's Name _____

Georgia House District# or Representative's Name _____

**PLEASE MAKE CHECK FOR \$37 PAYABLE TO GSRA AND MAIL TO:
GSRA, P.O. BOX 108, BETHLEHEM, GA 30620.**

GSRA MEMBERS CAN REGISTER ONLINE WITH A CREDIT CARD – NON-MEMBERS MUST COMPLETE AND MAIL IN THIS FORM WITH PAYMENT TO REGISTER.

RECEPTION REGISTRATION MUST BE RECEIVED BY January 31, 2020

Questions? Email: help@mygsra.com or Phone: 770-312-2799

P.O. Box 108•Bethlehem, Georgia 30620 www.mygsra.com