

Engineering Retirees Society ERS Newsletter

Quarterly meeting

Join us for our next all-member quarterly meeting, Thursday, June 5. We are planning a hybrid meeting based at the SPEEA office at 15205 52nd Ave S., Tukwila, Washington.

Our speaker is Steve Bauch from Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action (PSARA), speaking on "Hands Off Social Security."

Light lunch is planned for 11:35 a.m. at the hall, with our meeting starting at noon. There will be a Zoom connection available. The Zoom has provided OK listening and some limited speaking participation but no lunch. Look in your email for a meeting notice with Zoom link info and any changes in the plans. Join us in person if you can.

Investment meetings

We continue to hold investment meetings on the third Thursday of odd months. We email notices with the Zoom link and a link to any speaker-supplied information.

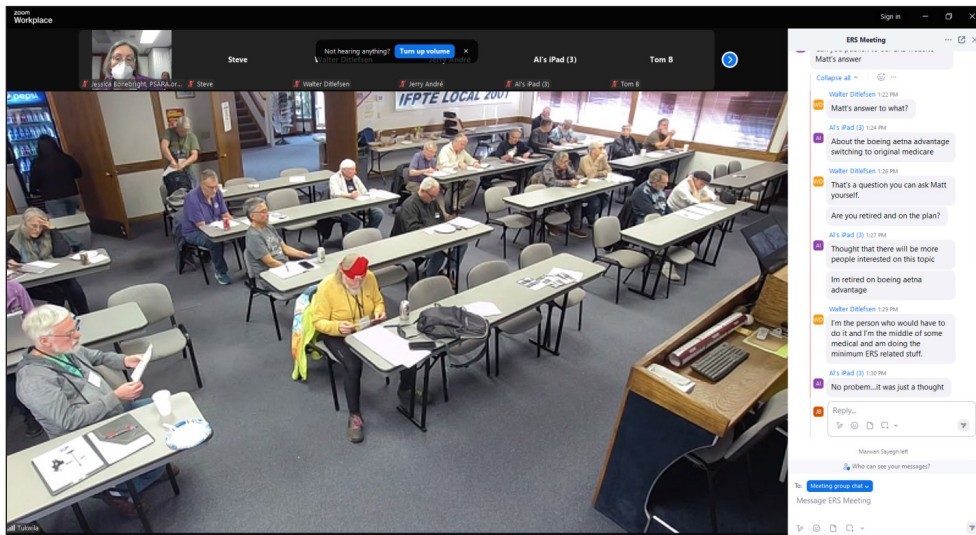


Photo of the SPEEA hall during our hybrid March meeting.

Editor's Corner

Following the political news these last three months makes one want to crawl into a corner ... I participated in several public protests. Standing with a crowd over seven lanes of traffic on I-405 with a banner at 8 a.m. is refreshing. That has helped me realize how many in the community also feel strongly opposed to the attempted destruction of established government social institutions, many of which are especially important for seniors. Those concerns extend to our kids and grandkids – as we see (and protest) proposed changes that endanger progress toward the livable

and lovable world we wish for their years on the planet.

It is a critical time to keep informed and to be active advocating for our long-time issues and for any other issues that affect our political ecosystem of a free press, voting rights and the rule of law. We also need to advocate for electing officials who support those issues. State and local off-year elections are under way and deserve our attention, as they can help protect our rights and our budgeting.

- Dwight

Minutes from the March 6 all-member meeting:

ERS President **Dave Baine** called the hybrid meeting to order at noon.

Guest Speakers: Robby Stern and Ann Watanabe from Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action (PSARA) presented "Level the Playing Field – Make Medicare more Fair, Equitable and Better!" In 1965, when Medicare was established, there were no corporate insurers offering private 'Advantage' plans. They were introduced in 1982 with claims they would lower medical costs and improve outcomes, but they've done neither. Medicare Advantage (MA) plans can require patients to get prior authorization for treatment and some plans require patients to choose medical providers from a narrow and changing network. Increasingly, medical providers are refusing to accept MA insurance plans due to delays and denials. The delays and denials mean medical decisions are made by the insurance companies rather than doctors.

Despite significant disadvantages, private MA insurers are taking over Medicare patient business largely because traditional/original Medicare has a \$1,632 annual deductible for hospitalizations, 20% co-pay for outpatient care and no limit on out-of-pocket costs.

This leads most traditional buyers to buy separate Medigap and prescription drug plans, which makes the up-front costs of original Medicare more expensive than MA up-front costs. However, the average overall cost of MA plans to the Medicare Trust Fund is higher for MA plans than for traditional plan patients. This is due to 15% of MA funds going to profits and overhead compared to just 2% overhead for original Medicare.

Ann and Robby shared several stories

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of patients suffering due to MA delays and denials of coverage. PSARA and others are advocating we “Level the Playing Field” by limiting co-pays and deductibles under original Medicare and add coverage for hearing, vision and dental care to traditional plans.

Visit www.PSARA.org for more information, including how you can support this effort as well as guides on how to ask your government representatives to support it.

Business: The day’s agenda was approved as submitted.

Secretary: **Jessica Bonebright’s** December meeting minutes were approved as published.

President: **Dave Baine** reported we’re returning to hybrid meetings – though we have to confirm meeting room availability, which means there may occasionally be a Zoom-only meeting. The March 20 investment meeting is (was) Zoom only.

Steve, Dave and Bob completed their review of the 2024 financial statements. No problems were identified.

Things are crazy with changes at the federal government level because of the new administration. Sign up for emails from National Retiree Legislative Network (NRLN) at www.NLRN.org for email updates on some of the changes affecting retirees.

Katrina Jones was appointed to be our new Insurance chair on the ERS Steering Board. We’re so glad to have her step up! The pension chair is open – please consider volunteering if you’re interested in pension issues. Just share any news or information you think ERS members would be interested in. An example could be an article about companies selling their pension liability to insurance companies. If the insurance company goes broke, people could lose pension dollars. The NRLN has proposed legislation to require any first insurer to buy reinsurance in case the first insurer goes broke.

Treasurer: **Bob Ferguson** reported ERS account balances at BECU are: Checking - \$3,105.92, savings - \$9,089.45, money market - \$24,936.32 and three CDs totaling \$35,537.37

for a grand total of \$72,669.06. We reported a total of \$68,231.41 at our March meeting. Our annual NRLN dues check for \$1,857 is in the mail.

Steering Board Chair: **Dwight Rousu** reported the board met and the newsletter went out and is posted on our website. We still mail 20 paper copies. We have about a three-week lead time using the current process.

Our former long-time ERS Secretary **Jim Ewing** is having some health issues. We’re making him an honorary member, so he’ll continue to get a paper ERS newsletter. He lives in Kent. Dave Baine plans to visit him and confirm he’s doing ok.

Committee and Rep Reports

Membership: Chair **John Neller** reported we have 691 members. Of that total, 400 have paid dues for 2025, another 200 paid through 2024 and 60 paid for 2022 or 2023. We dropped those who haven’t paid dues since 2021.

Finance: Chair **Steve Ellis** thanked **Bob Ferguson** for keeping great detailed records which made the recent successfully completed 2024 financial review easy.

Social: Chair **Steve Ellis** reported we have a \$1,500 budget item for a social activity in 2025. It could be used as a deposit for a cruise, then we’d sell tickets. An idea to consider is a boat cruise on Lake Union for July 4.

Programs: Chair **Dave Watt** reported he was looking for a speaker for the June 5 quarterly meeting. Dave reported our speaker will be **David Thread** for our May investment meeting – speaking about charitable giving and financial strategy. He didn’t have a speaker yet for our March hybrid investment meeting.

Sunshine Committee: Co-chairs **Myrv & Joan Johansen** reported **Leroy D. Mann’s** wife notified ERS he passed away in 2022. We added an online message that ERS expresses our sympathy. Other member passings include **James C. Farris**, 87, September 2024 – we sent a card. **James Pagenkopf**, 77, June 2024 – we added an online message. **Per Bolang**, 96, May 2024 – we posted a sympathy message and sent a card. **Peter Bloonstra**,

90, August 2023 – added an online message. **Paul Rentner**, 87, 2022 – added an online message. We also sent a get-well card to Steve Ellis.

Travel: Chair **John Neller** found a special low airfare from Seattle to Zurich from June through September. He also found specials with the Swiss airline Edelweiss. Boeing travel club’s upcoming trips are posted on Facebook and are open to former Boeing employees.

Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action (PSARA):

Liaison **Jessica Bonebright** reported on PSARA’s priorities in the current Washington state legislative session, including SJM 8002 to “Level the Playing Field for Traditional Medicare vs. Medicare Advantage Plans.”

Badges: Chair **Roger Aisaka** reported that at the next meeting, June 5, we expect to have badges for those who are here in March.

Insurance: Chair **Katrina Jones** is learning and ramping up on health care and insurance issues. Some people may benefit from a measles shot or booster given the current outbreaks. Kent Senior Center and other locations offer “Information for life” emergency dash and go. It’s a workbook by [Comfort Keepers](#) that anyone can buy for \$20 to build your emergency dashboard packet to log health data and use their checklists for things like medical advance directive, your insurance, legal documents and how to access your accounts, etc. If you do it in pencil, you can make updates. Maybe they can do a workshop for us?

Refreshment: Chair **John Meeker** reported ordering pizza for our lunch works better than sandwiches since they offer free delivery.

Communications and website:

Chair **Walt Ditlefsen** reported he has been trying to keep up with updates to our Mailchimp distribution list in coordination with **John Neller**. Walt also deals with junk and scam emails coming in. He needs a backup volunteer to help keep up our website and Mailchimp. **Dave Westman** has been our backup but now lives in Hawaii. No report on Gov. Docs

Ad Hoc Committee Reports

SPEEA Liaison: **Dave Baine** works

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with Carissa at SPEEA to confirm the SPEEA hall room is available for our meetings. The room won't be available for the next investment meeting, which will be Zoom only.

Legislative & Public Affairs: Dwight Rousu reminded us ERS joined NRLN about 25 years ago after doing a search for other organizations to work with to advance our legislative interests for retirees. We made an agreement with them, and we've carried on ever since. We pay \$3 per member per year, and once a year, we publish an NRLN request for individual contributions from our members. NRLN has started gathering interesting data on senior issues – see their [website](#) for more information.

It's too much to follow here everything in the news. It looks like voters elected an administration trying to wipe out services for seniors. We all need to work to do whatever we can to try

to preserve a safety net for seniors and future generations. Also, if we advocate along with local communities, we may make progress together.

National Retiree Legislative Network (NLRN): Steve Ellis reminded us that we're all NRLN members through our ERS memberships. You should receive monthly emails with information on senior issues at the national level. If you're not receiving their email messages, Steve will help get you on their list.

(No reports this meeting for Vice President, Service or Governing Documents.)

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Good of the Society: John Neller expressed his concern about how tariffs will affect Boeing. He spoke with reporter **Dominic Gates** about a lack of new Boeing plane orders from

China. He thinks it's likely they'll be back to buying from Boeing again in the future. Also, Ryanair is likely to buy more planes from Boeing. Tariffs could also lead to supply chain issues like buying aluminum. There's an especially large impact on things that go back and forth across the border with a tariff each time.

Upcoming meetings: Thursday, June 5, is our next quarterly membership meeting starting at noon for Zoom participants and at 11:35 a.m. in person at Tukwila. The next ERS steering board meeting is 11 a.m., Thursday, May 29. Investment meetings are at noon on the third Thursday of odd months. The next investment meeting is July 17.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Jessica Bonebright, secretary

Reminder about links

For those receiving a print copy of the newsletter, links are live in the newsletter posted [online](#) at engineeringretirees.org if you or your grandkids have access to a computer. The link target is accessed by CTRL-left CLICK on the link.

Service Corner

Many of us already volunteer in our communities or local organizations. ERS Services Committee Chair **Dick Beham** is active in the Bluebills, a service organization of all Boeing retirees, engineering or not. See [BlueBills.org](#). They invite you to become an active Bluebill member and join their efforts. Their motto is "Together, we can make a difference!" Their newsletter at [BB](#).

BlueBill contacts:

Central & South Puget Sound

Dick Beham

rsqdnrcr@foxinternet.com

North King & Snohomish County

Alan Rice

aerice77@yahoo.com

Olympic Peninsula

Clinton Webb

cwebb91275@aol.com

On the lighter side

Could we just take warning labels off of everything and let stupidity work itself out of the gene pool?

A friend who worked 40 years in Chicago says it's not that violent. He was a tail gunner on a school bus.

I'm best man at my buddy's second wedding. Is it appropriate to open my dinner speech with 'Welcome back everyone'?

Knock knock. Who's there?

It's the police. What do you want?

We just wanna talk. How many of you are there?

Four. Then talk to each other

Q: My child will not eat fish. What can I replace it with? A: A cat. Cats love fish.

My kids laugh because they think I'm crazy. I laugh, because they don't know it's hereditary.

When old people say: "Enjoy them while they are young," they are talking about your knees and hips.

My most dangerous sport is disagreeing with my wife.

Weight loss goal: To be able to clip my toenails and breathe at the same time.

I got gas today for \$1.39. But it was at Taco Bell.

One big mystery in life is why the kamikaze pilots wore helmets.

Get a bank loan, you'll be paying it back for 30 years. Rob a bank, you'll be out in 10 years. Free advice.

I let my blind friend borrow money the other day. He told me he was gonna pay me back next time he saw me.

REPEATER:

He can compress the most words into the smallest idea of any man I know.

Engineering Retirees Society
15205 52nd Avenue S
Seattle, WA 98188

Volunteers who make it all happen

Elected officers

President



Dave Baine

Vice President



Steve Ellis

Secretary



Jessica Bonebright

Treasurer



Bob Ferguson

Steering Board Chair



Dwight Rousu

Appointed Committee Chairs and Reps

Badges Roger Aisaka
Programs **OPEN** (Dave Watt)
Communications (website)..... Walt Ditlefsen
Medical Ins & Pensions Katrina Jones
Governing Documents Walt Ditlefsen
Discounts..... **OPEN**
Finance, Elections Steve Ellis
Refreshments John Meeker / Steve Ellis
Investments..... Dave Watt / Ken Kuehl
Social Steve Ellis
Legislative & Public Affairs.... Dwight Rousu / Dave Watt

NRLN Liaison Steve Ellis
SPEEA Liaison Dave Baine
Membership..... John Neller
Sunshine Joan and Myrv Johansen
Pension..... Dave West
Travel..... John Neller
Service (Bluebills) Dick Beham

We would like **VOLUNTEERS** for the chair **OPEN**-ings noted above and members for Refreshments committee.

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