



Aetna Retirees Association, Inc
PO Box 280165
East Hartford, CT 06128
www.aetnaretirees.com

news

Volume III, Edition 1

September, 2006

New Leadership For Aetna Retirees Association

The gavel has been passed at the Aetna Retirees Association (ARA). John J. Dwyer of West Simsbury who has led the organization since its founding two years ago has completed his term and will be succeeded by Bob Quinn of Wethersfield. Dwyer will continue as a member of the board with the title of Chairman Emeritus. The actions were taken at the ARA annual meeting Monday, September 25 in East Hartford.

The organization was founded to protect the benefits of retirees after Aetna unilaterally dropped its subsidy on dental insurance. "In just two years, we have achieved a great deal," Dwyer said. "We have opened a constructive dialog with the company. While it was initially confrontational in tone, that has improved greatly. We believe that management is now convinced that a better relationship with retirees serves the company and retirees in numerous ways."

"At the same time," Dwyer continued, "we have made important friends in the Connecticut Legislature and the Connecticut Congressional delegation. We have worked with other retiree groups to strengthen the rights of retirees to benefits promised to them as a part of their compensation. Recently enacted pension protection is a part of that effort."

Quinn, the organization's new leader, was a 30-year employee of the company and served as Vice President in the Corporate Human Resources Department. He has served ARA as Vice President. In accepting his new position, he praised the efforts of Dwyer, the Directors, the Leadership Team and ARA's many volunteers for their impressive progress. "We believe that we are entering a new phase of our efforts, he said. "While Aetna has demonstrated a more positive attitude, benefits continue to be at risk if other companies continue to renege on their commitments. True protection must come via the legislative route, and we will continue to work with retiree groups such as the National Retiree Legislative Network (NRLN) to convince Congress that it is its duty to protect retired workers."

A new position, Assistant Chairman, was added and Jean Waggett was appointed. She is an attorney and served Aetna as Executive Vice President in the International Division.

In other changes, Emmett McTeague of Saunderstown, Rhode Island and Bill Russell of Cromwell have completed their terms on the ARA Board. New directors named at the meeting are: Dick Wenner of West Hartford and Carl Walbam of Glastonbury. Directors continuing on the Board are Bob Gilligan of Vernon, Warren Azano of West Hartford, Greg Bertles of Charlestown, Rhode Island, Lee Simard of Pemaquid Point, Maine, Tom Trumble of West Hartford and Bob Hall of Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Arthur Bradbury of East Hartford ended his term as Secretary. Brian Farrell of Bristol will serve as the Interim Secretary pending discussions with several retiree candidates. Farrell is also data base manager for ARA.



NEW LEADERSHIP FOR ARA – *John Jay Dwyer, (2nd from left) who has led the Aetna Retirees Association during its first two years has completed his term as Chairman. He will be replaced by Bob Quinn (3rd from left). At left is Vice Chairman Jean Waggett and at right is President Bob Gilligan.*

Membership is Our Secret Weapon

The most important ingredient of the success of ARA is membership. When we stand alone, it is difficult to make our voices heard. Together, we are a force that cannot be ignored.

That's why it is so important for each ARA member to renew annually. If this organization is going to be successful we need a large base of dues-paying members.

It is equally important for you to help ARA grow by passing the word to former coworkers who are not yet members. Word of mouth is the way we grow.

The ARA treasury is in the black, but we need to keep it there, and to build the financial reserves we will need in the future as we play a greater role in addressing legislative issues. We need members to renew, and we need new members. Any dues payment beyond the

\$20 for annual membership is especially appreciated.

However, even if you cannot afford the annual dues, we still want you. In such cases, we waive the fee. We want to represent all of the retirees, regardless of their means. The spouses of deceased members are offered lifetime memberships with dues waived if they wish.

While ARA leadership has been frugal and responsible in handling its treasury, some expenses are inescapable. Maintaining a modest office – just moved from East Hartford to Wethersfield – a web site, a computer data base, etc., requires a steady stream of dollars.

As you can see, you are the lifeblood of our organization. If you have joined or renewed recently, thank you. If not, won't you please take care of it soon?

What We Are and Are Not

Some members have been disappointed that ARA has not taken action to solve their individual difficulties in dealing with Aetna. This reflects a misunderstanding of ARA's mission.

When members approach us to tell us of problems, we welcome the input because it helps us identify areas of difficulty that we need to address with Aetna. In such cases, if the member has not been able to resolve his or her problem, we either direct him or her to the proper place where it can be solved, or we contact someone at Aetna who can respond to the situation. In such cases, we find Aetna to be increasingly service oriented and eager to help.

We see our role as that of the honest broker, and we have played that role many times during the past two years, especially during the annual renewal period last fall and earlier this year.

While we bring your problems to Aetna's attention, ARA strongly believes

that we cannot become your personal advocate. This might require knowledge of personal information, and negotiation with Aetna. It would be inappropriate if not impossible for ARA to assume this role.

Members who are skilled in the use of personal computers usually are able to work problems through on their own. ARA is working with Aetna to provide more appropriate service to those who do not use computers or who have been unable to get results via this route.

CONTACT ARA!

We welcome your comments, questions, ideas and letters to the editor. See mail and website addresses on page 1.

Dave Smith, Editor