

**"Those who have long enjoyed such privileges as we
enjoy forget in time that men have died to win them."
—Franklin D. Roosevelt**





Newsletter

Vol. 18, Number 5

www.MyGSRA.com

May 2024

2024 Annual Meeting Macon, Georgia October 7th & 8th “Teamwork Makes the Dream Work”

Plans Being Finalized for the 2024 Annual Meeting

By Allan Hill and Kip Mann

Our intrepid Event Planner, Laura Pike, continues to finalize plans for workshops for the 2024 Annual Meeting on October 7th and 8th at the Robert Hatcher Sr. Conference Center on the Campus of Middle Georgia State University in Macon. So far, Laura has confirmed four workshops: Staying Fit in Retirement and Fall Prevention Tools, presented by Anthem; Social Security: Yearly Updates and Medicare Basics and Beyond, presented by AMBA; Caring for the Aging Brain: Strategies to Prevent Dementia, presented by AARP; and Changing the Investment Mindset in Retirement, presented by the Ballance Group.

GSRA has invited the chairs of the Senate and House Appropriations and Retirement Committees to participate in a round table discussion of the issues surrounding the granting of a meaningful COLA. In addition, GSRA has invited Jim Potvin, Executive Director of ERS, and Russell Carlson and Louis Amis of DCH, to discuss the outlook for our pension and health care for next year. As always, you can join long-time friends and former co-workers on Monday afternoon for the Opening reception. In order to keep the registration cost as low as possible, we will have box lunches on Tuesday rather than a buffet. After lunch on Tuesday, GSRA needs you in the General Session for the Annual Report from our Treasurer, Harold Grindle, a recap and outlook from our Legislative Team of Chuck Freedman and Chuck Clay, and the State of the Association from our President, Robert Riddle. We will then elect officers and Board members for 2025. If YOU have a desire to help shape the future of GSRA by being an officer or Board member, let Robert know at Robert.riddle@sbtingsights.com. It is an important and rewarding service helping your fellow retirees.

Join the team to reach our goal of financial security and healthy retirement for all state retirees by attending our annual meeting and demonstrating your support by your presence. To make your attendance as pleasant, comfortable and affordable as possible rates have been negotiated with hotels close to the Robert F. Hatcher, Sr. Conference Center.



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The following hotels have provided a special rate for the conference. **Please indicate you are a member of Georgia State Retirees Association to receive the special rate.**

Hotel	Negotiated Rates	Contact Information
Holiday Inn Express – Macon West	40 rooms/night, King or Double Queen - \$114.00 per night (taxes are extra)	478-803-0033
Comfort Inn and Suites Hotel	40 rooms/night, King or Double Queen - \$107.00 per night (taxes are extra)	www.choicehotels.com/reservations/groups/CG68K4 or call 478 621 7977
LaQuinta Hotel	40 rooms/night, King or Double Queen - \$95.00 per night (taxes are extra)	478-788-6226

Only you can determine how many nights you wish to stay. If you live close enough to Macon, you may wish to commute and save the lodging expense or you may want to enjoy the sights Macon has to offer and stay as long as you wish. All the hotels have stated you can stay at the rates quoted days before and after the meeting takes place.

We need all our team there! See you in Macon!



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From the Home Office

By Robert Riddle

Hello GSRA Members,

Even though the legislative session is over GSRA volunteers continue to work relentlessly for each of you. As you can see from this newsletter, a lot of great work is happening at the Chapter meetings. I encourage each of you to join your local Chapter. If there is not one close to your county, consider starting one!

GSRA has many sponsors both new and old dedicated to improving our organization through their sponsorship and offering services beneficial to our members. This month I want to highlight AMBA, who has been a loyal sponsor for many years and has just renewed for another year. In addition to insurance products, AMBA has a program called Your Passport to Savings. GSRA members can access discounts from the Passport mobile app at Costco, Sam's Club, Hertz, Whirlpool, Kohl's, Disney and more. The next time you receive communication from AMBA, please take a look at all the benefits offered.

The Atlanta Postal Credit Union (APCU) has chosen not to sponsor GSRA this year. The APCU had been a long-time sponsor, and we are sad to see them go.

We have a new sponsor that takes the place of APCU and offers the same services and more. I would like to introduce our newest sponsor, David Balance of Merrill Lynch Wealth Management, the Ballance Group. David and his team offer financial planning and management. They strive to build personal, trustworthy relationships, while helping clients reach their financial goals by building a holistic, goals-based plan centered around your personal situation. They will be attending future chapter meetings and our annual meeting.

If you have any suggestions on potential sponsors that could offer beneficial services and products to our members, please send me contact information. The GSRA Board will thoroughly vet each sponsor to ensure they align with the needs of our members.

I have thoroughly enjoyed attending your Chapter meetings and talking with you on a personal level. I am looking forward to seeing all members of the South Fulton and Northwest Metro Chapters in June.

I hope everyone has a safe and healthy summer!

Robert

Local GSRA Chapter News

East Metro Chapter

The East Metro GSRA Chapter met March 28th at the First Baptist Church Annex in Covington with 23 members and one guest present. After socializing followed by lunch and chatting with old friends and making new friends, President David Taylor opened the meeting.



Figure 1: East Metro Chapter members enjoyed lunch and fellowship with 23 members present.

Chapter member Elizabeth Barnes introduced guest speaker, Sonya Yeadon, Legal Shield Associate.



Figure 2: Sonya Yeadon, Guest Speaker (L) and Chapter member Elizabeth Barnes (R)

Ms. Yeadon, who has been with the company since 2002, gave an excellent presentation on identity crimes. Her topic was one of importance and relevance to everyone. She reviewed a number of methods by which perpetrators commit fraud and identity crimes and noted that identity crime is the fastest growing crime in the U. S. Identity crime can be broken down into many areas including drivers' licenses being compromised, IRS fraud, medical and Social Security fraud, mail fraud and numerous other types of identity crimes and theft.

She discussed the benefits and costs of Legal Shield and how the insurance can help victims of identity crimes. She gave a breakdown of two major categories and costs. In addition to protection against identity crimes, the company also helps with wills, trusts, medical directives, civil lawsuits, and others.

Ms. Yeadon's presentation generated a lot of interest as well as a number of personal accounts of identity issues as well as testimonials from some members who currently have some component of Legal Shield protection. Many questions ensued with significant interest in the topic.

After the discussion, President Taylor asked B. J. Bennett to update members on the nominal membership increase and the need for increasing the dues. She also mentioned the April ERS Board Meeting where Board members will decide as to how recently allocated funds will be used.

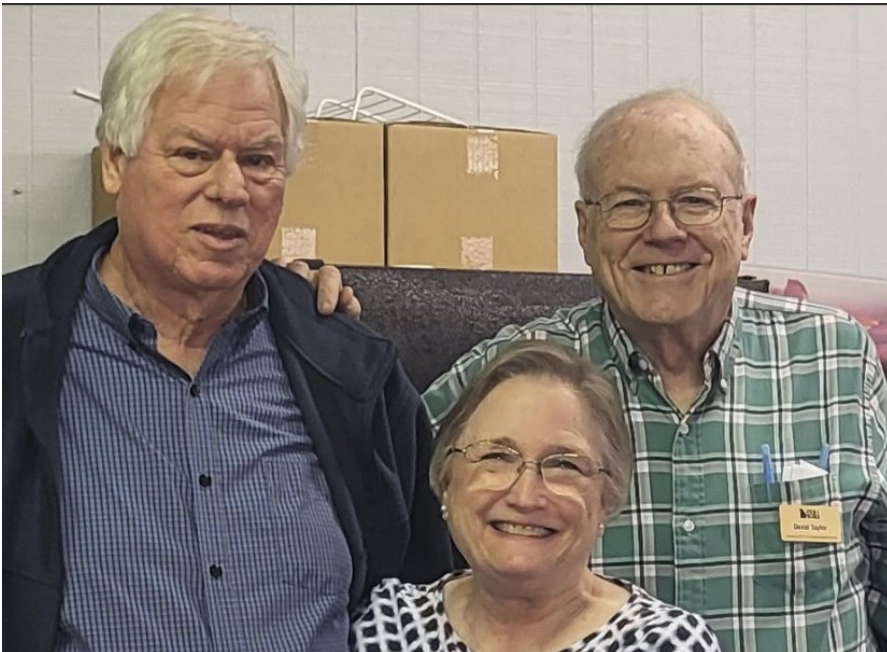


Figure 3: President Taylor with Chapter Volunteers Joan and Don Chambers

The drawing for door prizes ended the meeting. The next meeting is expected to be held in late June.

Coosa Valley Chapter

The Coosa Valley Chapter met May 16, with 18 members and two visitors attending. We had Mary Ann Long, District 1, Public Health Immunization Coordinator, speak about the immunizations seniors need. She offered to look-up everyone's immunization record and email it to us. We can then use that information to talk with our health care provider about our individual needs. The information was very informative and well received.

The Chapter was reminded that now is the time to book our hotel rooms for the annual GSRA meeting to be held in Macon on October 7 and 8, 2024. Everyone should continue to check monthly newsletters for registration forms and workshop selection.



Figure 4: Coosa Valley GSRA welcomed Mary Ann Long, District 1 Public Health Immunization Coordinator for an informative presentation.

Jan Hardeman, Outreach Director, reported on the monthly lists she receives with names and addresses of potential members. She then sends a postcard inviting them to our next meeting. One new member, who had received one of our postcards, was actually in attendance. This proves the postcards are effective!

We were thrilled to have chapter member Jay Jarvis back with us. Jay reports he has recovered from his accident last October. A Big Thank You for his contributions of being our "picture taker" at the meeting!

Once again, the need for new officers was discussed, with no volunteers. Our next meeting will be August 22, 2024. Location and speaker to be announced.

CSRA/GSRA Chapter

The CSRA/GSRA chapter met on May 21 at the Richmond County Health Department in Augusta.



Figure 5: The Augusta Chapter's speaker was Brandon Warrick with the Suicide Prevention Coalition.

Brandon Warrick with the Suicide Prevention Coalition presented a film, MY ASCENSION, documenting a 16-year old's attempted suicide and her ensuing journey towards hope for herself and other at-risk teens and her work in educating others in reducing the stigma associated with mental health problems. We were all very touched by this poignant documentary.

President Clara Brown invited anyone interested in joining through Zoom the meeting of the GSRA Board on June 13 to contact her for information.

The next meeting of the chapter will be held on June 18, 2024, at 1 pm at the Richmond County Health Department, 950 Laney Walker Blvd., Augusta. GSRA Lobbyists Chuck Freedman and Chuck Clay will address the chapter regarding COLAs, bonuses and other important legislative items affecting state retirees. Please plan to attend (and bring a friend) to have all of your questions answered firsthand. Refreshments will be provided, and you may win a door prize!

Northeast Chapter Restart

With interest in restarting the Northeast GSRA Chapter, a successful meeting was held on May 1, 2024. Phyllis Grimes started the meeting with an icebreaker that was instrumental in getting everyone loosened up and interacting. That set the stage for the officer's presentation. Great participation from all attendees!

We enjoyed an excellent presentation by the Gwinnett County Sheriff's department on avoiding fraud and scams.



Figure 6: Gwinnett County Sheriff's Department made a presentation on avoiding fraud and scams.

Several people outside the core group, had attended at least one of the previous meetings which gives us hope that we can resurrect this Chapter. There was a mix of recent retirees and those who retired 30+ years ago.



Figure 7: A great group joined the Northeast Chapter meeting including recent retirees and those retired over 30 years.



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Welcome New Members!

Name	County	Name	County
Robert Williams	Bulloch	Sid Jessup	Oconee
Edward Pevey	Effingham	Penny Cannon	Tift
Brenda Paggett	Thomas	Kirk McGlamery	Bulloch
Rosa Rone	Thomas	Mary Thornton	Dougherty
Wanda Allen	Glynn	Gia Compton	Newton, Rockdale
Annie Brown	Baldwin	Phyllis Hightower	Bibb
Peggy Williams	Butts	Charles Bell	Meriwether
Mary Freeman	Thomas	Scott Wilkes	Columbia
Rosebud Virgil	Thomas	Mattie Baldwin	Thomas
James Paramore	Mitchell	Vickie Reeves	Bibb




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*Fixed sample interest rate: 34.7% per year with a one-time fee of \$49.00. For example, a \$3,000.01 loan repaid in 26 installments over 26 months, the APR will be 35.95% and the approximate monthly payment will be \$170.00 (assuming a loan execution date of 06/01/2023). Other terms and conditions apply, and your loan may vary depending upon your loan execution date, actual payroll deduction schedule, etc. Must be employed for at least 1 year with the employer to be eligible to apply. Not all applicants will qualify for a loan. Loan is based on an agreement between the borrower and BMG Money, Inc. The Georgia State Retirees Association is not responsible for any financial aspects of LoansforRetirees.





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