

PROFESSIONAL VIEW
PEA'S NEWSLETTER FOR JULY-SEPTEMBER, 2003

FROM THE PRESIDENT

PEA WEBSITE

The Professional Employees Association is happy to announce that we now have a website. Our website address is peaonline.org. A subcommittee of volunteers surveyed the membership regarding their interest in creating a website then reviewed the pros and cons of having a website. They determined the benefits of obtaining a website far outweighed the disadvantages for our membership. After reviewing the subcommittee's recommendation, the executive committee agreed it was time to join the many other organizations, businesses and individuals who have established their own websites. We therefore asked the committee to take the necessary steps to become part of the internet world. We believe the website will allow us to disseminate important information in a timely manner and archive important material for future use. Additionally, it is hoped we may be able to reduce and/or eliminate the hand delivery of meeting notices, time sensitive information and the quarterly newsletter if our members make it a habit to check the site regularly. We also plan to use the website to provide links to other websites that have information our members could use for their jobs and careers.

John Larson, from the St. Paul libraries, has agreed to start the website and will use volunteers who have expressed an interest in this project to develop the basic design and format of the site. I want to thank the committee for the work they have already accomplished and hope each of you will check out our site in the near future.

Website technology has already proven its worth for linking all parts of the world and it serves as a readily accessible repository of important information. When you have had time to consider what you believe the PEA website should have on its pages let your steward or one of the executive committee members know and we will share your ideas with the website committee. I look forward to watching this website grow.

CITY EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE - 2004

On a more serious note, some of the most important decisions City employees will make about their health care coverage for the next year need to be made now, in October. The City of Saint Paul and Health Partners are again offering four different health insurance plans for each employee to choose from for 2004. Before you decide which plan to pick, you need to carefully consider the health status of you and your family, if you have a family, your financial status and whom you want to use as your primary medical provider. If you are taking family coverage, can you afford up-front out-of-pocket expenses for the deductible plan? How much can you afford to pay toward your health insurance premiums? Some plans are quite expensive. Are you willing to change your regular doctor if you change plans? Do you have a serious medical problem you are being treated for?

CITY EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE - 2004 (con.)

All of these criteria plus a whole host of other issues should be part of your decision making process.

Because of the implications of your choice, I want to encourage you to give your decision serious thought. If you fail to choose a plan, by default, you will be placed in the deductible plan. The deductible plan may be best for you, but that should be something you have chosen, not necessarily something that was done by default. If you choose a plan that, after a few months you decide, does not fit your needs you cannot change to another plan until open enrollment next year.

**RETIREMENTS FROM THE
PEA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

In June of this year the executive committee lost a very dedicated and hard working member when Mary Ann Miller decided not to run for reelection. Although no is irreplaceable, her enthusiasm and objectivity are sorely missed. In the same vein, for those who are not familiar with me I plan to retire during 2004 and will not be running for reelection to the Professional Employees Association executive committee next June. In my 33 years as a City employee and member of PEA member I can tell you that PEA has been blessed with people who have been willing to sacrifice their time and personal interests to serve and represent the rest of the members. We need to continue to encourage more people, especially younger employees, to become involved in the leadership of our Association. Now is the time for each of you to consider how you can help others while you help yourself by serving as a steward or as an executive committee member. Consider running for an executive committee office in June of 2004. The rewards are not financial, but there is the knowledge that you have helped make the working conditions of you and your fellow employees better, that you have shared your talents and that you will get to work with other talented people who serve on the executive committee.

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CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAW CHANGES

At the December general membership meeting you will be asked to consider several changes to the constitution and by-laws. In order to allow you time to digest and assess the impact of these changes I am providing a brief list of the primary changes and an explanation why they are being considered.

1. Change the administrative year from July 1 to June 30 back to January 1 to December 31.

The date of the administrative year was changed several years ago to avoid changing the negotiation chairperson in the middle of the negotiation process. Very seldom has this been a problem. Typically we negotiate two and three year contracts but elect officers every year. In addition, the City negotiation committee has had two or three executive committee members at all times to provide continuity. Also, both the City and School District negotiation committees have the benefit of having our business agent on them with the City having the business agent acting as the lead person. I believe this change makes sense for the above noted reasons plus the December meeting draws the greatest number of members and is a logical time to old elections.

2. Delete Article V “committees” and combine its provisions with Article III “Officers and Executive Committee”.

Article III covers the officers and executive committee, it seems logical to include the committees with this article.

3. Article VI. 3. Add new duties to the secretary.

These duties are typically included with a secretary and are being added to afford more clarity to the job specification.

4. Article VIII- 3. Groups of Stewards. Change the number of employees assigned to a steward from 25 to 30 and eliminate the thirteen steward groups.

This change will allow more flexibility in assigning stewards and will create more equity among the stewards. Some stewards currently represent only four or five members while others have 25 to 28 employees to represent. We will assign stewards to their logical work groups but may add employees from other nearby and/or isolated departments to achieve greater equity.

5. Article VIII - 4 subsection (b). Term of Office. Clarify who may vote to remove a steward.

The current language is not clear how many votes are necessary nor who may vote to remove a steward who is not performing their duties.

6. Article IX Remuneration. Add reimbursement of \$50.00 per quarter for the website editor and \$50.00 annually for the person who audits our books.

The website editor is a new job and should receive remuneration commensurate with the pay of the newsletter editor. The auditor has been paid \$50.00 in the past with a motion of the executive committee, but we believe the remuneration should be clearly spelled out in the constitution and by-laws.

Please give these proposals your consideration, come to the next general membership meeting on December 3, 2003, at Mancini’s and let your vote be counted. The constitutionally required notice of the general membership meeting will be sent to you in November.

Steve Roy

FROM THE PERSONNEL CHAIR

Submitted by Karin Anderson

<u>Members from the City:</u>	250
<u>Members from ISD:</u>	63
<u>Current number of members in PEA:</u>	313

Please welcome our newest members!

Andre Best, CAO
Jodi Wallin, Water

**Remember: PEA General Membership Meeting
Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2003 (at Mancini’s)!**

PEA's Web Site is Online
Submitted by John Larson

Last year, a survey of the members of the Professional Employees Association found that they would like to have information about the organization available via the World Wide Web. In recent months a domain name and web hosting space was purchased, and PEA is now as available to you as your nearest web browser. You can check out PEA's new web site at **www.peaonline.org**.

Preliminary information, such as executives, stewards, and the group's by-laws are already available. As the site continues to grow, **peaonline.org** will be the place to find membership information, newsletters, contact information for your executive committee members and stewards, links to current contracts and other related items, and other information related to PEA. Look for navigational graphics and other images to appear as we continue to develop the site.

If you have any suggestions for what you would like to see on the PEA site, or if you have web and/or computer graphics skills you would like to contribute, contact John Larson (Libraries) at **john.larson@ci.stpaul.mn.us** or 651-266-7046.

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Responding to Auto Insurance Cost Increases
Submitted by David Peterson, Treasurer

Auto insurance rates are expected to increase again this year.

The increases are a result of increasing medical and car-repair costs, rising jury awards, and lower investment income for insurance companies. Some possible responses:

1. Shop Around

If you have a good driving record, you might get a better deal from a direct agent. However, if you've had recent tickets or crashes, it might be best to check with agents of the major insurance companies. But also consider the service factor with the agent you are using.

2. Get All Available Discounts, including:

a. Combination Discounts

You may save 10% to 20% on your premiums if you insure both your home and your car with the same company, or insure more than one car with the same company.

b. Good-Student Discounts

Students with GPAs of 3.0 or higher can be eligible for discounts of as much as 25%. Young male drivers may benefit from this more, since their premiums are typically higher.

c. Safety Discounts

This varies for such items such as anti-lock brakes, airbags and automatic seat belts.

3. Increase Your Deductible

Increasing your deductible can cut your premium dramatically. And since insurance is meant to cover major expenses, having a higher deductible may make a lot of sense. Consider raising your deductible up to \$500.

4. Drop Some Coverage

If you have an older car you may want to consider dropping collision coverage altogether.

5. Consideration when Purchasing a New Car

If you are looking for a new car, be aware that those with the highest theft rates and repair costs will cost more to insure.

Of course all these considerations are for contemplation purposes, and are not to be construed as dedicated advice.

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