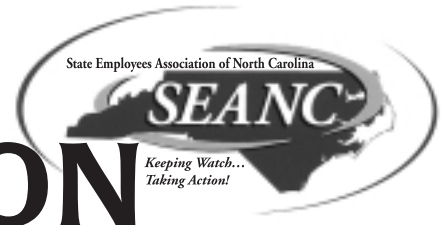


THE SEANC CONNECTION



District 19

Vol. 7, No. 3, May 2000

Chair's Column

TAKE A LOOK AT OUR WEB PAGE

By Martha Fowler



Statewide, SEANC has developed a new theme this year of "Keeping Watch and Taking Action" and incorporated it into a new SEANC logo. Locally, we are excited that District 19 has developed a new web page for our district. It is complete with links to the State offices, specific information about our district, a SEANC membership application that can be downloaded, and a

calendar of events.

As you review our web page, you can see how SEANC plays a vital role in securing benefits as well as protecting the rights of State employees. SEANC provides a unified voice where we need it most—in the General Assembly, to the Governor, and before North Carolina State departments and agencies. Beginning in May, the State budget is being revised by our legislators. We challenge all State employees to call and write their legislators, encouraging them to give us the salary increases and benefits that we deserve. We must retain and improve our rights and benefits.

You can view our web page at <http://www.unc.edu/depts/seanc19/>

DISTRICT 19 CONTINUES ITS FUND-RAISING EFFORTS

FUND-RAISING—What comes to mind when you hear that word? Well, for the members of SEANC District 19, it means we can:

- Pay the expenses of our delegates who will be going to convention this September in Greensboro
- Publish four newsletters a year
- Develop an outstanding web page
- Award scholarships to deserving students
- Support worthwhile volunteer action projects
- Work alongside our fellow district members as we do the fund-raising.



During the next SEANC year we will have a small stand at the UNC football games. It doesn't take too many people to operate and it allows us to see some of the games. Once again we will be substituting at the Dean Smith Center for basketball games when other groups are unavailable. We want you to join us. It's a great way to see just what fund raising for SEANC is all about and it's fun. For more information, call Gerry Lawrence at 968-4120 (w) or 419-1370 (h).

Retirees' Corner

GROUP BUYING IS A SPECIAL BENEFIT FOR SEANC MEMBERS

The Group Buying Directory supplies each of us with a list of businesses that extend discounts to SEANC members. The more we use the vendors listed in this directory, the more money we can save. Look for the new statewide Group Buying Directory in the May issue of *The State Employee Reporter*.

In recent months, District 19 has provided two additions to the list: The Potted Plant at Eastgate Shopping Center (and their greenhouse) and the Carolina Car Wash in Carrboro.

Many businesses, especially locally owned ones, gladly agree to give a 10 to 15 percent discount to SEANC members when asked. The form is easy to complete. Contact Jim Vaughn at 408-0346 for more information.

SOCIAL SECURITY EARNINGS LIMIT HAS ENDED

Americans age 65 through 69 will be able to earn as much money as they want without losing Social Security benefits under a new law signed April 7, 2000. The law was retroactive to January 1, ensuring that many seniors who lost social security benefits this year will receive a refund check in May.

The repealed law was one that caused people ages 65 to 69 to lose \$1 in Social Security benefits for every \$3 in wages above an annual limit of \$17,000.

The earnings penalty was a remnant from an era of high unemployment when policymakers wanted to encourage older Americans to retire and make room for younger workers. However, today's booming economy and tight labor market have changed that situation.

LEGISLATIVE RALLY

Wednesday, May 17

11:30 AM

Legislative Building,

16 West Jones Street, Raleigh

Congratulations on the huge turnout!

DISTRICT 19 OFFICERS

CHAIR
Martha Fowler
966-1289

IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR
Gerry Lawrence
968-4120

1ST VICE CHAIR
Anthony Weaver
962-6270

2ND VICE CHAIR
Jim Vaughn
408-0346

SECRETARY
Kay Daniels
732-8126

TREASURER
Pamela Siler
843-8094

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DANA COPE COMES TO TOWN

The guest of honor at our April 18 monthly meeting was the new Executive Director of SEANC, Dana S. Cope, who has been a State employee for the past eight years. He spoke convincingly on the need for a more assertive approach by SEANC to lobby effectively on behalf of State employees. He believes in creative thinking to solve our problems. The motto he has developed for his staff is "Whatever It Takes, Make It Happen."



Dana Cope addresses District 19

As the Director of Governmental Affairs for the North Carolina Department of Labor, Cope has maintained close contact with the General Assembly and Congress on labor related issues since 1992. From 1988 to 1992 he owned and operated a political consulting firm in Washington, DC. He is a native of Dallas, Texas and a graduate of Southern Methodist University. He also holds certificates from the Harvard School of Law on negotiating techniques and the Carolina Labor Law School in Wilmington on arbitration, conciliation and mediation training-employment law.



Martha Fowler greets Dana Cope

Cope's first priority for SEANC is a meaningful pay plan that rewards on-the-job performance and factors in the rate of inflation. He wants to reinstate pride and enthusiasm in being a State employee.



Welcome aboard, Mr. Cope. We're with you all the way.

District members take a break

EXPLAINING THE PUBLIC SECTOR

By James Coley

Not too long ago I was watching on television one of those "town hall" meetings where politicians take questions from the audience—only this one was in Great Britain. One of the questions caught my attention because it made mention of three components of society: the private sector, the public sector, and the government. You never hear this in the American media; here there is always a stark contrast between "the private sector" on the one hand and "the government" on the other. I was struck with the realization that in the United States we have lost the important distinction between "the public sector" and "the government."

This comes after years of simple-minded political rhetoric from those who wish us to think that just about everything done by the private sector is good for the country, while just about everything that is done by any other part of society is bad for us. We hear it in countless speeches, commercials, and "political roundtables." We hear it on talk radio. We read it in editorials and letters to the editor. The constant drumbeat is that the private sector is efficient, sensible, and democratic while "the government" is bureaucratic, misguided, and authoritarian. We are told that tax cuts are always a good idea, no matter whether it is those who are already well off who benefit most from them, because individuals are always in a better position to spend money wisely than is "the government." We are warned that some proponents of health care reform advocate "big government" which will take away individual choice. Over and over again, the contrast drawn is between the free and open "private sector" and the cold rigid "government."

By always using the term "government" this sort of rhetoric continually evokes a series of negative associations. When we hear mention of "government" we are apt to think of the coercive powers of the law and of law enforcement, of the faceless bureaucrat sending us a bill for taxes or fees, and of the world of politics with its obfuscation and strife. But those of us who are State employees know better than to collapse everything that is not part of the private sector and place it under the term "government." We know that, in our own work, we help others and are productive in making North Carolina, and the country, a better place to live. Most of us are not involved in enforcing laws or collecting revenue. We provide services to people that they generally can't get from the private for-profit sector, and fulfill a need that is essential in a healthy and fair society. We understand that all of these things we do should not be painted with the broad brush of the word "government," with all of the negative associations it has acquired.

We are, and can be proud to be, part of the public sector. And we would do well to remind others that a thriving public sector is necessary in a free and fair society, and that the private for-profit sector has never been willing, or able, to take care of all the needs of our people.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL MEETING

- When? Tuesday, June 20, 2000, at 5:30 p.m.
- Where? Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA), 400 Jones Ferry Road, Carrboro
- Who? Every member of District 19 (in fact, any State employee)
- Why? Meet SEANC scholarship winners
Find out who our award winners are
Elect officers and delegates for 2000-2001
Review the year's accomplishments
Talk to our special guests
Surprises

To attend, please call Martha Fowler at 966-1289 or email us at seanc19@unc.edu by June 1. The catered dinner costs \$5.

WANTED: NOMINATIONS FOR 2000-2001 OFFICERS AND AWARDS

The Nominating Committee is seeking nominations for the following offices:

Chair • First Vice Chair • Second Vice Chair • Auditing Chair
Constitution/Bylaws Chair • EMPAC Committee Chair
Nominating Committee Chair
Policy Platform Committee Chair • Delegates

To nominate someone, please contact Pamela Siler at 843-8094 or mail your nominations to her at UNC School of Nursing, CB 7460 by May 25.

The Awards Committee is seeking nominations for the following awards:

District Chairperson of the Year • SEANC Member of the Year
SEANC Distinguished Service Award
SEANC Remembrance Presentation (to a deceased member)
District Member of the Year
District People's Award • SEANC District of the Year

To nominate someone for an award, please contact Marie Tate at 732-8126 by May 25.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

The turnover rate of SPA State employees was 14.45 percent last year. In other words, one in seven SPA employees left State service between January 1 and December 31, 1999.

Figures from the Office of State Personnel show that the average State employee's salary has fallen fifteen percent behind the national average in base pay increases during the past ten years.

From "The Destruction of Effective State Services, Part I – The Problem," *District 39 Update* (March, 2000), commentary by Mark Dearmon.

LEGISLATIVE GOALS



Last year's SEANC convention delegates approved the policy listed below. We all hope that the General Assembly, which convened May 8, will agree.

1. The Comprehensive Compensation System was changed to the State Personnel Act Pay Plan in the first reference in G.S. 126-7 and then to State Employees Pay Plan (STEPP) in subsequent references throughout the statute.
2. The cost-of-living adjustment is tied to the annual increase in the Consumer Price Index of the previous calendar year to reflect a true measure of inflation.
3. The State Personnel Act Pay Plan would be funded yearly, with the career growth recognition award becoming part of the continuation budget and the cost-of-living adjustment and performance bonus becoming part of the expansion budget.
4. The State Personnel Commission should be given flexibility in creating performance appraisal systems for each agency that define parameters for employees whose performance is deemed unsatisfactory, meets management's expectations or exceeds management's expectations.
5. Employees who have reached their pay grade's maximum should be eligible for a two percent bonus in lieu of a career growth award.
6. All SPA employees should be eligible for an annual cost-of-living increase.
7. The pay plan is fully funded with a two percent career growth award, a cost-of-living adjustment matching the Consumer Price Index and a performance bonus equaling two percent of total payroll.
8. A salary increase of five percent should be awarded to cover the difference between cost-of-living adjustments and increases in the Consumer Price Index since 1992-1993.

Let your legislator know that you support these changes.

MAY 1-7 PROCLAIMED AS STATE EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION WEEK

Governor James B. Hunt, Jr. designated the week of May 1-7 as "State Employee Appreciation Week." In his proclamation Governor Hunt salutes State employees by saying, "State government is served by local and dedicated employees ... having the highest levels of skills and professionalism, as well as having a determined commitment to the State...on duty every day, ready to render assistance with willingness and courage to their fellow North Carolinians in critical times of need."



GET YOUR SCHOLARSHIP RAFFLE TICKET TODAY

A raffle will be held on September 9, 2000 at the convention, with the proceeds benefiting the SEANC Scholarship Program. Grand prize is a 2000 Ford Ranger truck and first prize a 25-inch color television set. Tickets cost \$1. For more information, call Martha Fowler at 966-1289.

SEANC
1-800-222-2758
www.seanc.org

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

District 19 meets the third Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m., at the Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA), 400 Jones Ferry Road, Carrboro. There is plenty of free parking and refreshments are served. All State employees are welcome.

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|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| May 6, 2000 | Day of Caring |
| May 8, 2000 | Legislature Convenes |
| May 16, 2000 | Monthly Meeting |
| May 17, 2000 | Legislative Rally, Raleigh |
| June 20, 2000 | Annual Meeting |
| July 18, 2000 | Monthly Meeting |
| August 15, 2000 | Monthly Meeting |
| September 7-9, 2000 | Annual Convention, Greensboro |
| September 19, 2000 | Monthly Meeting |

The Retirees' Chapter meets on the fourth Tuesday morning of each month for breakfast. For information, call John Boone at 919-942-1526.



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Chapel Hill, NC
27599-1110

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