

### Saving Social Security Tops Agenda at LP Conference

Addie Brinkley, RMC Legislative Chair

For retirees and future retirees, CWA's annual Legislative-Political Conference was more important than ever this year as the Bush administration's scheme to privatize Social Security took center stage.

U.S. senators and representatives who spoke to the 500 CWA members and retirees gathered in Washington D.C. in early March. All pledged to fight any proposal to privatize and put at risk American's guaranteed Social Security benefits.

On trips to Capitol Hill with lawmakers during the conference, retirees talked about Social Security, the Medicare prescription drug plan, and an amendment to the IRS code that would help protect health care benefits for Lucent retirees by allowing the company to transfer a small amount of money from its over funded pension..

But saving Social Security was the most urgent issue on the table.

Lawmakers said they are willing to work with President Bush to ensure Social



Senator Debbie Stabinow (first row, fourth from right) joins CWA Secretary-Treasurer, Barbara Easterling and the executive board of the Council at the Legislative-Political conference.

Security's long-term financial health, but all made the point that even the White House has acknowledged: Private accounts not only wouldn't improve solvency, setting them up would make the problem worse by trillions of dollars.

The executive board of the Council met briefly at the conference itself with Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), who is helping lead Senate opposition to the Bush plan.

The board and several rank-and-file Council members also met with Karlin McNeill, a congressional staff member serving the Ways and Means Committee. A lively discussion ensued when McNeill asked the retirees what they thought should be done to shore up Social Security. The board told him that CWA retirees would help in any way possible to support a plan for Social Security that protects the system's solvency as well as its beneficiaries.



Former RMC District 2 vice president Imogene Wood confers with RMC district 4 president Bonnie Murphy at the Legislative-Political conference



Kathy Harrison and Calvin Foster from RMC 2108 at the Legislative-Political Conference

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#### Save the Date

#### RMC Annual Meeting Aug. 27, 2005

The 2005 Retired Members' Council annual meeting is set for Aug. 27 in Chicago, the Saturday before the start of the CWA convention, which runs through Aug. 31. All RMC members and their guests are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Please return the card below and we will send registration and housing information when it becomes available this summer.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

RMC # \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

## From the Chair

Ed Creegan

Remember when a little bit of sugar helped the medicine go down? Nowadays it's a gimmick straight from the Republican playbook – use cotton-candy words to disguise the message so we'll all swallow it.

Their spin is designed to get us to vote against our own best interests. Never have they tried so hard to deceive as they are now doing with the campaign to privatize Social Security.

The good news is that polls show people are starting to get it. Just a 1/3 of Americans approve of how Bush is handling Social Security. But the White House is still in there pitching, so it's up to us to demand the truth, and call on the media to report it. That's the surest way to protect Social Security.



Letty Scofield, Local 4322 retiree and CWA Mobilization Coordinator, is ready with two signs and a whistle in Washington, DC, one of over 70 cities where demonstrations took place on March 31 to protest private accounts for Social Security.

Bill Freeda, the RMC Merger Partner Sector VP, attended a Town Hall meeting in the district of Rep. Peter King (R-NY). He reported that King refused to show up and called the participants "partisan hit men."

## Retired Members' Council Executive Board

Dist 1 Pres	Ed Creegan*
Dist 1 VP	Audrey Buchanan-Swan
Dist 2 Pres	Mike Vivirito
Dist 2 VP	Roger Wood
Dist 3 Pres	James Starr Sr**
Dist 3 VP	I. B. "Fuzzy" Finch
Dist 4 Pres	Bonnie Murphy***
Dist 4 VP	Anne Variano Macko
Dist 6 Pres	Bobby Brown
Dist 6 VP	Tommy Parsons
Dist 7 Pres	Ann Cummings
Dist 7 VP	Lorraine Miller
Dist 9 Pres	Addie Brinkley
Dist 9 VP	Chuck Latimer
Dist 13 Pres	Jack Caldwell
Dist 13 VP	Ray Myers
MP Sector Pres	Joanne Bruch
MP Sector VP	William Freeda

\*Chair \*\*Vice Chair \*\*\*Secretary-Treasurer

## Private Accounts Not the Answer

Bonnie Murphy, RMC District 4 President

Remember when you talked to your children about sex, drugs and smoking? Well, now it's time to talk to them about George W. Bush's claims that Social Security is going bankrupt and private accounts will save the day.

Unfortunately, many of our younger people have been convinced by a Madison Avenue-type misinformation campaign that Social Security won't be there for them. The Journeys' winter 2004 issue disputed this claim in the article "The Truth About the Social Security Crisis."

Here are three things to tell the under-55 crowd:

1. Diverting money from traditional Social Security into private accounts will do nothing to improve solvency. In fact, it would result in shortfalls that will require *trillions* of dollars in borrowing.
2. Analysis shows that future retirees would receive much lower guaranteed benefits with private accounts than they would under the current system.
3. Proposed plans call for private accounts to be turned into annuities upon retirement. Annuities die when you do and cannot be passed on to your heirs. What will be passed on to generations to come will be the burden of trillions in additional federal debt needed to finance the shift to private accounts.



Retired RMC Council chair Robert Rickman was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation from the Council in Richmond, Virginia in March 2005. From left, current chair Ed Creegan, Mr. Rickman, RMC District 2 president Mike Vivirito and RMC District 2 vice president Roger Wood.

## Nominations Open for RMC Executive Board

Are you interested in serving on the Retired Members' Council Executive Board? Elections for three-year terms will be held during the last three months of 2005. Newly elected members will take office on January 1, 2006.

The eight districts and the merger partner sector are each represented by a president and a vice president and are elected by secret ballot by members in good standing of the clubs affiliated with the Council within each district or sector.

Nominations open September 1st, 2005. If you would like to run, send a one-page resume to the RMC Secretary-Treasurer Bonnie Murphy, 3679 South 32<sup>nd</sup> St, Greenfield, WI 53221-1114 by September 30. It will be photocopied and enclosed with the ballot.

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CWA RETIRED MEMBERS' COUNCIL  
501 THIRD STREET, NW  
WASHINGTON, DC 20001-2797



Joanne Bruch, the CWA RMC merger partner president is introduced as the temporary chair at the March 2005 founding convention of the Wisconsin Alliance for Retired Americans. Wisconsin is the 19th state to join the Alliance.