SERS annuitant newsletter has changed its looks and its name. Your newsletter is now called the SERS Advantage.

SERS MOVES

The Pennsylvania State Employes' Retirement System will be moving its central office operations in early August 1992 to 30 N. Third Street, PO Box 1147, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1147, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1147. Our building is located on the corner of Third and Walnut Streets (adjacent to the Walnut Street Parking Garage), with the reception area on the fifth floor. The move will be completed by August 10. The general telephone information number will remain (717) 787-6293.

(See SERS Moves on Page 3)

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Survivor - Spouses Health Coverage

The Pennsylvania Legislature passed Act 35 which became effective on October 14, 1991. Act 35 permits the surviving spouses of State Employes' Retirement System (SERS) retirees to elect to continue in the same retirement health coverage plan they were enrolled in prior to the death of retirees. Currently, this applies only to those spouses of retirees who died on or after October 14, 1991.

Within weeks of the time the SERS is notified of a retiree death, their spouse, if any, will receive conversion information, rates and an The spouse, if enrollment form. interested, would then complete the enrollment form and return it to the If the survivor-spouse is entitled to receive a monthly benefit check from the SERS, the SERS will determine the amount of the premium deduction for the health coverage. The cost of the health care will be from the spouse's SERS deducted pension payment, if any. If the spouse does not receive a monthly check from the SERS, or if the monthly check is not large enough to cover the premium deduction, the SERS inform the health plan will of the annual administrator deficiency. The plan administrator will then bill the surviving spouse for the remaining annual premium deficiency.

Survivor-spouses who elect to continue in the retiree's group health plan may stay in the group (See Survivor on Page 2)

Editorial

Advantage is defined as affording a benefit or a gain; and benefit is defined as that which promotes a favorable result and enhances well-being. The purpose of this newsletter is to address the needs of the retired members of the SERS, and those of their beneficiaries, by providing information which is informative.

You are strongly encouraged to participate in this process by writing to:

SERS ADVANTAGE
P. O. Box 1147
Harrisburg, PA 17108-1147

What subjects would you like to see covered? We welcome your input and your input is <u>essential</u> if <u>your newsletter</u> is going to accomplish its goal of addressing your needs. We look forward to hearing from you.

Survivor - Spouse Cont'd

coverage as long as they continue to pay the premiums. Questions regarding the type of coverage available should be addressed to your administrator. If administrator is the PA Employes Benefit Trust Fund, the address is PO Box 3061, Harrisburg, PA 17101. The local phone number is 717-232-8676 or toll free in-State at 1-800-522-7279. Out of State retirees may call toll free at 1-800-628-0174. Those who are not covered by the Trust Fund should contact the agency from which the member retired.

Important Reminders

The following items should be kept in mind as they can be both valuable and significant to you.

- 1. Keep your beneficiary form current. If anything changes such as name, address, death or marriage, a new beneficiary form must be completed. If a joint and survivor option was selected, for example Option 2 or 3 and you become divorced or your survivor predeceases you, you should contact the SERS regarding other options available to you.
- 2. Remember to include your name and social security number on all correspondence sent to the SERS.
- 3. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has changed the W-2P form to a 1099R form. All retirees and beneficiary annuitants will receive this new form every January for the previous tax year.
- 4. Your retirement checks are mailed to you on the next to last working day of each month. If you have not received your check after the first 10 days of the next month have passed, you should call and notify the SERS. Also, you may wish to convert from paper checks to direct deposit. A direct deposit form will be sent to you if you call or write to the SERS requesting a form.
- 5. Cost-of-living allowances (COLA's) require the passage of a law by the legislature. The SERS carries out those laws enacted by the PA State Legislature, however, the SERS cannot unilaterally grant a COLA.
- 6. You may start, cancel or change the amount of federal withholding on your monthly benefit at any time. Write or telephone the SERS or the Internal Revenue Service for a W-4P, Annuitant's Withholding form.

Money is a terrible master but an excellent servant. — P. T. Barnum

State College Regional Counseling Center Opens

The State Employes' Retirement System pleased to announce establishment of our State College Counseling Center which officially opened on June 1, 1992. The office is located at 208 Hamilton Avenue, Suite 3, State College, PA 16801. The local telephone is 814-863-6505 and the toll-free number is 1-800-The office provides to 432-0888. annuitants death benefit counseling, counseling on change of option due to divorce or the death of a survivor, and assistance in completing direct deposit forms, beneficiary forms, federal withholding forms and health coverage forms. The office provides services to those active and retired members who are located in Cameron, Clearfield, Centre, Cambria, Blair, Huntingdon, Mifflin, Juniata, Bedford and Fulton counties.

Did You Know.....

That it takes 15 facial muscles to smile and 43 to frown.

That the record number of bananas eaten in 2 minutes is 17.

That 75% of homes have a VCR.

That there are 93 million television sets in the United States and that 14% of homes have 4 or more TV sets.

You always find something in the last place that you look.

SERS MOVES CONT'D

In late September the Harrisburg Regional Counseling Center will open and will be located on the third floor of the same building. The Harrisburg Regional Counseling Center will provide services to active and retired members of the SERS who reside in Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry, Schuylkill and York Counties.

Directions to the SERS new location from the various interstates are as follows:

From Interstate 81: Take I-81 to Front Street, South Exit, Number 22. Go south on Front Street to Forster Street and turn left. Using the right lane, go to Third Street and turn right. Proceed to Third and Walnut Streets.

From Interstate 83: Take I-83 to the Second Street Exit, Number 23. Go north on Second Street to Pine Street and turn right. Proceed to Third Street and turn right. Go straight to Third and Walnut Streets.

From Interstate 76 (PA Turnpike): Take Exit 18 to I-83 North to the Second Street Exit, Number 23. Go north on Second Street to Pine Street and turn right. Proceed to Third Street and turn right. Go straight to Third and Walnut Streets.

Parking can be found at the following locations:

Walnut Street Parking Garage: On Walnut Street proceed one-half block west of the SERS new building to Court Street. The garage is located on the left at the corner of Walnut and Court Streets.

Locust Street Parking Garage: On Walnut Street proceed one-half block west of the SERS new building to Court Street. Turn right onto Court Street. Proceed one block to Locust Street and the garage is on the corner of Locust and Court Streets.

....Walking Off Anxiety....

Walking is an excellent technique to ward off anxiety and worry and to prompt solutions to difficut problems. The steady action of walking helps thinking, both conscious and unconscious. This is not true of more strenuous exercise.

To encourage problem-solving while walking: Prior to the walk, clearly identify the problem. Then begin walking and put the problem aside by thinking of anything else....or preferably nothing at all. You may well find that while walking a solution will come to mind.

Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear. — Mark Twain

Reverse Mortgages

Reverse mortgages are available from more banks due to a federal law that expands a federally backed program for people who are 62 and older. You may be able to tap into your equity which is the difference between the value of your property and what is owing on the mortgage. There are 41 states that offer reverse mortgages including the State of Pennsylvania. You may wish to contact your local financial institution for further information.

(While the SERS feels that this article is informative to its readers we are not advocating or recommending reverse mortgages.)

Changed Your Address?

If your mailing address changes or is incorrect, complete the form listed below and return it to:

SERS P. O. Box 1147 Harrisburg, PA 17108-1147

NAME:
SS#
Old Address:
New Address:
7
Date New Address Goes Into Effect:
Your Signature and Date:
It is important for SERS to have your current mailing address as it is used to send valuable information such as your year—end tax statement.

If a man could have half of his wishes, he would double his troubles. — Benjamin Franklin
