

## President's Message for February 2017 by Richard C. Warbrouck

I want to thank all of you who pay your annual dues by check for your quick response to our 2017 dues payment notice. The dues payments are coming in at a faster rate than ever before, with about ninety percent returning the dues payment form that was in the December and January Newsletters. Returning the dues payment form allows us to update our information regarding your membership. I can't tell you how frustrating it is when we go to the membership roster for a phone number, address or email address and there is no phone number or email address. More inconvenience when we are notified of a death and we turn to the roster for the name of the spouse to express our condolences and there is no name and no notation if there is a spouse.

We appreciate the complementary notes and donations to the legislative fund. We do keep a record of the donations. If we ever have to turn to the members for an assessment we would ask those who have not made a donation first. A good way to remember a friend or a loved one is to make a donation in their name to the legislative fund. Seeing their name allows us to affirm that they are never forgotten.

Megan just completed the 2016 financial report for the Director's review. I am pleased to report that our General Fund account ended the year 2016 with a \$10,800.00 surplus. In the 2017 income and expense projection Megan indicated a \$7,000.00 surplus. This of course, barring any major lawsuit, or legal expenses. If such should accrue, we have sufficient funds in savings for such emergencies. The legislative fund allows us to participate in the legislative process and lobby in Olympia to protect what we have earned. As a reminder, we have passed about eighteen bills since 2000 amending the LEOFF I Retirement System, stopped two retirement system mergers and helped in passing several LEOFF II bills. I can't stress enough the need for the LEOFF II members to keep this organization healthy for retired members in the future, particularly if there is ever a LEOFF III retirement system or if only to protect the LEOFF II retired members. Remember, in the future there could be an attempt to merge the LEOFF II retirement system with PERS, the Public Employees Retirement System.

The Christmas Luncheon was a success in spite of the problem with the furnace in the club house. As I mentioned last month this facility is getting older and suffering from deferred maintenance. We need to find another location. We did get a call from a member who is also a member of the Inglewood Golf and Country Club who said that he would help us secure the club house for the 2017 luncheon. I put in a call to the receptionist and I am waiting for a call back. If you know of another facility please give us a call. We would also like to hear from someone who is a member of the Sandpoint Country Club. This year we received \$2,075.00 in ticket sales and \$586.00 from the sale of raffle tickets and the auction. After all expenses we had a surplus of \$221.74 that was deposited in the General Fund account.

Director Roy Orlando and I attended a luncheon with the Tacoma Retired Police Officers Association. We discussed the history of the Retired Firefighters of Washington, our meeting schedule, monthly Newsletter, and election of officers. We

explained what we do and what we have accomplished in Olympia. We also discussed the many issues where we have helped both retired police, firefighters and widows who have a problem with the Department of Retirement Systems in Olympia or with local disability or pension boards, highlighting the recent issues with the cities of Edmonds, Longview, Bremerton and Snohomish County Fire District #1. We pointed out that we do have some retired law enforcement officers as members in our organization. I think they were impressed when I showed them the amount of donations we receive each month and the annual amount and the names of candidates we donated to in the 2016 elections. We also mentioned the number of bills that we have passed amending the LEOFF I Retirement System since 2000. I gave examples of the bills to remind them of the impact to all LEOFF I members police and fire. I pointed out that we are paying the freight for all the LEOFF I members police and fire, active and retired. Our membership is declining and to maintain our strength and effectiveness and to develop more equitable funding among all LEOFF I members we should consider developing a statewide law enforcement officers association or a joint law enforcement/firefighter state association. Although no action was taken there seemed to be a wide range of agreement.

The Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP) submitted the LEOFF I/TERS I merger study report to the legislature on January 7, 2017. The report is 266 pages with reports from the Department of Retirement Systems, the State Actuary, the Attorney General's Office, the LEOFF II Board, and Ice Miller, a tax consulting law firm. The report is difficult to copy and to read. You can get a link to the report at [state.actuary@leg.wa.gov](mailto:state.actuary@leg.wa.gov) or [osa.leg.wa.gov](http://osa.leg.wa.gov) or by calling 360-786-6140. You can obtain a two page comment sheet on the report put out I believe by Senator Erickson, one of the sponsors of SB 6668 at:<http://thelens.news2017/01/18/statepension-fund-merger-gains-eyed/>. There are a lot of unanswered questions in the report and no definite recommendations for or against a merger.

We are also developing a minority report to be submitted to the legislature. There is no clear indication that this bill will be reintroduced but we have been told unofficially that it will be. We will have to fight this in the legislature and in the courts. If it is passed we will all have to call, write, email and attend hearings in Olympia. We will be looking into chartering buses to Olympia and retaining the services of a contract lobbyist who is a former Republican State Representative who served in the House of Representatives for 10 years. His wife is a retired LEOFF II Seattle firefighter and he is a former King County paramedic. Please stay tuned and ready to respond.