



Johns
Manville
Retirees
Association

May 2007

www.jmretirees.org

Dialogue with JM

Rocco Russo and Ed Bettinardi met with Fred Lowe, Vice President of Human Resources and Jerry Rueschhoff, Director, Total Rewards for Johns Manville on March 8, 2007 to explore the retirees' relationships with JM and to ask JM to consider some changes. Those concerns and the JM answers follow:

Consider providing individual, JM, or even Berkshire Hathaway support for legislation on health care that would benefit both JM, JM retirees and other Berkshire Hathaway companies and retirees. We will advise you as we see legislation that looks promising, and we can discuss further at that time.

JM: There is no doubt that health care in America continues to be a significant challenge not only for JM, our employees and retirees, but for our grandparents, parents, our children and grandchildren. We agree that there is an opportunity for substantial improvement in the way health care is delivered in the United States and are open to looking at proposals for legislative change for health care and providing support when it is in line with our corporate values. We agree that we should review these opportunities individually as they arise and we look forward to working together to make a difference in this important area.

Consider splitting the Medical and Prescription retiree health plans apart for retirees who would be able to join Medicare part D at no cost because of their limited income. This would be great savings for low-income retirees, while having minimal impact on JM.

JM: As you know, Johns Manville offers the Hardship Waiver Program for retirees with a total annual household income of \$15,000 or less. If a retiree qualifies for the waiver, JM will pay the entire cost of their JM-sponsored retiree medical insurance, which includes prescription drugs. Although we understand why you might think it is a good idea to split our plan into separate coverage for medical and prescription drugs, the greater administrative cost and the cost of offering choice to retirees for what is a fairly predictable benefit (i.e., prescription drugs) will add cost to the retirees who do not elect to drop prescription drugs. We believe that the current plan is the most equitable solution for our retirees as a whole.

Consider some way to advise all salaried retirees about the JM Retirees Association (JMRA). Points we considered were a) provide JMRA with a current list of salaried retiree addresses, b) have JM do a mailing to retirees and/or an inclusion in the Retirees Newsletter about JMRA and how to join, and c) including a document about JMRA and how to join in each new retiree's package of information.

JM: None of the options you have outlined for us are feasible and unfortunately, we have no alternatives to suggest.

Investigate the possibility of advising the QCC and JMRA on the death of a retiree. As it works now, JMRA and the QCC are dependent upon word of mouth, e-mail or the newspaper to learn of a retiree's death. We, as retirees, believe it would be better to advise as many people as possible, both through the QCC and JMRA about the death of any retiree, not just those we randomly hear about. JM is the only possible source of this information as a retiree's pension would change at death. As part of the procedure followed by JM when a retiree dies, an e-mail could be sent to the QCC and JMRA, causing little extra effort or cost by JM.

JM: We understand your interest in receiving information regarding the death of a fellow retiree. However, due to privacy concerns and in respect for the individuals that would not want JM to take on this notification role, it would be inappropriate for JM to share this information.

A View from Washington

A. J. (Jim) Norby, President, NRLN

This year's seventh annual NRLN Leadership Conference and Board meeting in Washington, D.C., was highlighted by an informative, lively discussion of pension and health care issues by two panels of leading congressional and committee staff members for the 110th Congress. These insightful experts, representing U.S. Senate and House of Representative members and key legislative committees, will be instrumental in shaping the agenda on Capitol Hill during 2007.

These panel discussions provided an invaluable opportunity to meet face-to-face with senior staff members of relevant committees that are directly involved with those issues of most interest to NRLN members and retirees in general. These panelists represent both sides of the aisle, although the composition of the panels tended to reflect the new majority party in Congress.

Participants on our pension panel included Jim Paretti, representing Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon (R-CA), ranking Republican on the House Committee on Education and the Workforce; Michele Varnhagen, Chief of Staff for the House Committee on Education and the Workforce; and Judy Miller, Chief of Staff on the Senate Committee on Finance.

Members of our health care panel included Dr. Wendell Primus, Policy Advisor to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi; Ben Klein, Legislative Assistant to Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-ND); and Bill Pewen, Legislative Aide to Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME).

These panel discussions are an important extension of the everyday work of the NRLN and its Washington staff. Through this early dialogue, these influencers can glean a better understanding of the concerns and challenges facing today's retirees. At the same time, these panels provide the NRLN with access to those staff and committee members who will play a critical role in the development of legislation that will directly impact retirees and their families. Their influence on the legislative process is undeniable.

An ongoing process: While space does not permit a detailed report of these panel discussions, they provided two-way, spirited and sometimes contentious views. As part of our ongoing legislative process, the importance of these discussions cannot be underestimated. This process consists of multiple initiatives to bring our message (and yours) to those elected officials who make the decisions, and to influence these lawmakers in any legal and honorable way we can. We do this with our professional staff in Washington, and we do it with the help of our grass roots advocates who were especially effective in helping shape last year's pension reform legislation. We continue to need grass roots advocates to champion our health care agenda during 2007, so please volunteer and become a part of the grass roots organization.

Our Leadership Conference included a presentation from Ralph Maly, vice president of the Communications Workers of America, who gave a sobering account of how corporations are handling health care benefits for retirees. Maly cited examples of Lucent, AT&T and other companies to make his point. One example that struck me as particularly onerous involved Lucent, which Maly reported as receiving \$100 million a year in prescription drug rebates related to Medicare Part D and Federal supplements. According to Maly, Lucent does not apply any of these dollars to retiree health care benefits. Maly added that Lucent has not paid a nickel for health care purposes to represented retirees since it was spun off from AT&T in 1996. The funds used are those transferred from AT&T and from retiree pension income.

Shocking indeed, and that's just one example of what's going on all over America.

On the second day of our meeting, the NRLN Board of Directors elected a new member, Chuck Gilbert from the TelCo Retiree Organization (Pacific Telesis). Chuck reported that after long debate, the TelCo Board endorsed the recommendation of the NRLN and is now in the process of enrolling its membership into the Capwiz database. Once enrolled, members will have an opportunity to become advocates in our grass roots organization.

The Board also voted to accept a legislative agenda for 2007. This is a dynamic document and, depending on circumstances, will change from time to time. A current version on our agenda appears on our Web site at www.NRLN.org.

A summary of the 2007 NRLN legislative agenda for the 110th Congress appears below:

Health care legislation

- Support an amendment to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) that creates Maintenance of Cost Payments (MCPs) as an income supplement for health care to retirees effective on their first day of retirement. Retirees would use the MCP to purchase health care benefits for themselves and dependents from company or third-party plans. An MCP would enhance retiree (all ages) cost awareness and reduce corporate uncertainties. (Note – The above is an oversimplification. Our legal team and the Legislative Committee are working to finalize the language of this amendment.
- Revision of Medicare Part D has four different issues:
 - (1) Support HR 4, Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiations Act of 2007.
 - (2) Support importation of prescription drugs through S.242 (Sens. Dorgan and Snowe). It's called the Pharmaceutical Market Access and Drug Safety Act of 2007.
 - (3) Increase Part D subsidies paid to employers who offer better coverage than Part D and who agree to maintain their plans.
 - (4) Support HR 4685, the Medicare Prescription Drug Emergency Guarantee Act. This would prevent in-year interruption of Medicare Part D coverage.
- Acceleration of generic drug approvals.
- Deductibility of health care costs.
- Endorsement of the recommendations of the National Coalition on Health Care (NCHC). Specifically, endorse the specification for reform using the principles of coverage, cost, quality, safety, financing and administration. There are a number of bills now in Congress that include some of the above principles, but none that we can yet endorse.

Pension legislation

Our agenda also includes a proposed ERISA amendment that would protect pension assets from use in corporate restructuring. The provision would stop the use of pension assets to pay for lump-sum layoffs or severance pay, and/or enhancements to selected plan participants to the exclusion of retirees whose plans are subject to a collective bargaining agreement.

So much for the legislative agenda. You can follow its changes and adjustments on our Web site.

Moving on, Ed Bettinardi, the new chairman of our Advisory Committee on Health Care, gave his report. This Committee was formally chaired by Mimi Hull, and is mainly composed of Colorado retirees. They are currently focused on Senate Bill 229, Medicare for All Bill, which in its present form has a number of flaws. With the Committee's help, we will work to make several proposed changes before reintroduction into the 110th Congress.

Both Bob Martina, NRLN Network coordinator and Ed Beltram, NRLN Communications Director/Capwiz gave informative reports.

All in all, I thought it was a very productive and enriching week.

Let me share one final thought. Last year we devoted much of our time and resources on issues surrounding pensions. We concentrated on the Pension Reform Act and were successful, as reported before (remember the thousands of grass roots messages that moved the Conciliation Committee to our view on several issues?). This year, our activity, while not forgetting pensions, will be on health care issues, especially as they impact retirees. You will be hearing a lot about these health care issues, which all eight Democrat candidates for President have made a cornerstone of their campaigns. We will be observing, studying, and recommending action on various health care initiatives as the year unfolds. It should be interesting.

Manville Public Library

Tom Krzemien, George Jakelsky

In October 2006, Ed Bettinardi initiated a program with the Manville Public Library to store and exhibit Johns Manville memorabilia. George Jakelsky, a Manville Public Library Trustee and JM retiree, indicated that a few Johns Manville items are already on display. A plaque lists the names of Quarter Century inductees and JM'ers who achieved 50 years of service at the Manville location. There also is a plaque dedicated to the employees who made the supreme sacrifice during WW II. The library is currently in the process of writing a biographical account of the town, Manville, New Jersey. Johns Manville played a significant role in that history.

If you are in Manville, New Jersey, visit the Manville Public Library, at 100 South 10th Avenue and check out the JM memorabilia.

Finances

Johns Manville Retirees Association		LS
Fund Activity Report (Audited)		2/28/2007
As of December 31, 2006		
	12/31/2006	12/31/2005
Beginning Balance, Funds on Deposit (Jan 1)	39,516	38,604
Income:		
Colorado Credit Union Interest Eamed	837	518
JMRA Dues Collected (1)	340	16,390
Total Income	\$1,177	\$16,908
Expenditures:		
Accounting Fees for CPA Review	300	350
NRLN Dues	2,412	6,000
Travel (2)	2,487	988
Directors and Officers Liability Insurance	3,492	3,492
Newsletters and Election Expenses	3,086	4,133
P.O. Box Expenses and Postage	440	578
Other (Internet Web Site 2 Years)	0	455
Total Expenses	\$12,217	\$15,996
Net Change In Funds During Year	(\$11,040)	\$912
Ending Balance, Funds on Deposit (Dec 31)	\$28,476	\$39,516
Allocation of Assets:		
Colorado Credit Union Checking	60	120
Colorado Credit Union Savings	5,823	23,764
Colorado Credit Union Certificate	22,593	15,632
	\$28,476	\$39,516

(1) JMRA dues are requested and collected in odd numbered calendar years
(2) Travel expenses to attend NRLN meetings in Washington

Help Wanted

Tom Krzemien

Globalization has created immediate openings within the Johns Manville Retirees Association Regional Representative staff. No travel required. Work from home. This is a critical part-time position responsible for coordinating fellow employee input with the Directors and Newsletter staff. Do not miss this opportunity if you are a Johns Manville Retiree Association member. Openings are available in the Atlanta GA and the Alexandria/Richmond IN locations. Prior experience preferred but not required. Contact your newsletter editor to join us. Excellent working environment. No benefits. EOE

In Memory

Denver

Roland (Rollie) Barton

Frank W. Buck

Roger D. Brunson

Richard G. "Dick" Ducey

George E. Duley

Robert J. Collier

Linda Hingher

Ted Schasny

Charles B. Swanson

Thomas Kurnec

Los Angeles

Richard Jarvi

Ontario, Canada

Helmuth "Kelly" Kainz

Fun on Your Computer

Tom Krzemien

There are many informational resources on the Internet. You can find almost anything with the search engines that are available with your service provider. Here are a few of my favorites.

Want to check on the status of legislation in your state or local government? www.statelocal.gov.net/ provides a directory of links to official websites of state, county and local government services for any state.

Curious about real estate values where you live? Give www.zillow.com a look. This site gives you ball park figures of more than 70 million homes with some nice satellite zoom images. The Zillow number is the result of a proprietary formula using your home's address, tax appraisals and assessed values so it may not reflect true real estate value.

Both of these sites come wrapped with plenty of advertising but they are still interesting.

In March 1876, Alexander Graham Bell patented the process that would become the telephone. Every day that invention allows us to communicate with others. It also directs us into a myriad of menus designed to give us information without talking to person. www.ivrhacks.com provides directions on how to bypass the telephone prompt menus and connect with the company representative.

And don't forget our jmretirees.org site. Information relevant to JM retirees is posted as it becomes available. From there you can follow links to the National Retiree Legislative Network (NRLN) and get the latest information at the legislative level.

Reach out for Information

- Our Website of articles, past newsletters, link to Adobe Acrobat Reader. <http://jmretirees.org>
- Newsletter editor email tom@jmretirees.org
- Johns Manville company website. (1-888-709-4567) www.myJMDirect.com
- National Retiree Legislative Network <http://nrln.org>
- Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 <http://seniorlaw.com/dra2005.htm>
- Links to Medicare part D information. <http://medicare.gov/>
- My favorite medical information website <http://medlineplus.gov/>
- My favorite drug information website <http://drugs.com/>

Write to us at Johns Manville Retirees Association, P.O. Box 3336, Centennial, CO 80161-3336

Membership in Johns Manville Retirees Association

Your retiree association is dedicated to protecting and improving your benefits. Our greatest concern is your medical and prescription plans, vital benefits promised to you but not guaranteed. We are an active member of the National Retirees Legislative Network (NRLN), which represents millions of retirees and, as an organization; we pay dues to support their efforts. Your President, Rocco Russo and John Leasher, NRLN's Vice -President, Secretary and Treasurer, attend network meetings in the nation's capitol and other members of your board may travel there to attend hearings or meet with members of the legislature.

Each year, ending with an odd number, we ask for your financial support to continue the efforts being made by the Johns Manville Retirees Association that represent your best interests. Please complete the form below and return it with your \$20.00 dues payable to the association. If you wish to receive this newsletter by E-mail, please provide your E-mail address. If you recently changed E-mail providers, please update your member record with a corrected address.

We always welcome new members. If you know a Johns Manville Salaried Retiree who is not a member of our organization, please invite them to join.

Thank you for your continued support.

Johns Manville Retirees Association
P.O. Box 3336
Centennial, CO 80161-3336

Yes, I want to update my membership for 2007.
My \$20.00 check payable to Johns Manville Retirees Association is enclosed.

Name: _____ Phone: (_____) - _____

Address: _____

City, State: _____ Zip + 4 _____ + _____

E-mail Address: _____

Confirm e-mail Address: _____

() Yes, Send my Johns Manville Retirees Association newsletter by E-mail.

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