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MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL:

Annual Membership renewal for June 2002-May 2003 is due. Just use the remittance slip inside and the convenient return envelope enclosed. You can't beat it for the price! Don't forget to let your elected representatives know you are watching how they vote on retiree issues!

COLA STATUS

In our last Newsletter, we reported the status of a "COLA Enhancement Bill" in both Houses of the New York State Legislature. At that time, owing to the shock of the deadly World Trade Center attack on September 11, 2001 and its impact on the stock market, we were not optimistic that the bills would ever be acted upon or be sent to the Governor for signing.

However, the Alliance of Public Retiree Organizations of which PARA is a member, has lobbied legislators in both Houses in Albany this new 2002 session and obtained sponsors for the bills. The bill number in the Assembly is A9889 and in the Senate S6775. The bills provide for: 1) to increase the COLA from 50% of the Consumer Price Index to 100%; 2) to increase the maximum Consumer Price Index benefit from 3% to 5% and 3) to increase the cap from \$18,000 to \$25,000. The COLA enhancements would apply to retirees who have been retired 5 years and who are 55 years old or older.

With the introduction of the two bills in the respective Legislatures, the rest is up to us. If we are to have any success, you must contact your respective Legislators in their home district offices or in Albany. Call them (their local telephone numbers are listed in each phone book); write them; fax them; E-mail them, etc. Tell them to be alert to these important bills and that you will be watching how they vote. Remember this is an election year!

Meanwhile, your Board of Directors Officers will be in Albany personally visiting every Legislator that they can. The Alliance has scheduled a Lobby Day on Friday, May 31 at 12 noon in the Albany Legislative Office Building third floor terrace. Materials will be available to distribute to all Legislators. All are invited to attend! However, our lobbying is not limited to one day. It is a year round effort and we need all New York resident retirees to call, write or visit their Legislators in their home offices periodically. These visits, calls and letters are every bit as important as participating in the Annual Legislative Action Day. All retirees in other States who have friends and relatives in New York should request them to do the same. Let's see if we can pull this off! Good Luck!

A regular Newsletter will follow in a few weeks!

"Age is a very high price to pay for maturity."