The MSU Association of Retired Faculty (ARF) is the only organization in Montana that advocates for retired university faculty. In addition to advocacy, ARF also strives to foster the benefits, interests and well-being of retired faculty through social, educational, and promotional activities and to encourage continuing retiree contact and involvement with the University. ARF membership comprises MSU faculty retirees, spouses, faculty retirees from other institutions of higher learning, and active MSU faculty who are near retirement.

The nationwide inflation of medical costs has caused the Montana University System to consider changes in the health insurance options for post-65 retired faculty. Primarily via presentations at ARF’s monthly luncheon/meeting, you are provided up-dates on the changes under discussion in Helena. ARF members Ken Hapner and Doug Young participate in meetings of the Inter-unit Benefits Committee in Helena and they keep us apprised of the latest developments. They and ARF members Jerry Coffey and Don Mathre, who have served on the benefits committee, help us understand the implications. We post-65 retirees can expect reduced health insurance benefits and/or increased premiums, similar to most Montanans. The benefits committee will choose its best alternative within a few weeks, at which time we can decide whether an ARF response is necessary and, if so, what that response should be.

To accomplish its mission, ARF is involved in a wide range of activities other than monitoring the health insurance issue. For example, one project is directed at improving the MSU retirement process and one is directed at improving social contact among retirees. A list of current project teams is available on the ARF web site (http://www.montana.edu/retired/officers.htm). If you are interested in either joining an existing project or creating a new project, please contact Don Mathre or me. New ARF projects can be created by any member who identifies an issue and formulates a goal for resolving the issue. After discussion and project approval at ARF’s monthly meeting, the proponent will convene a team of interested ARF members who work together at a retiree pace. One would expect that an organized effort facilitated by ARF will have a greater chance of success than if the individual retired faculty members work independently. Regardless of your interest in active participation, please let me know about your ideas and concerns.

I believe that ARF will be more effective if its project teams are a cross-section of retirees who represent diverse training and experience. However, many ARF teams lack representation from important constituencies. The absence of women team members is of special concern to ARF. I urge each of the many women in our retiree community – whether faculty or spouse – to consider active involvement in ARF. Retirees, the university, and the community-at-large would benefit if a greater spectrum of retirees could find the time to participate. In any case, I hope you all will attend ARF events whenever possible.

The ARF Executive Committee has scheduled a meeting with MSU President Cruzado and Provost Potvin on Tuesday, Feb. 3. The primary goal is to meet Martha Potvin and acquaint her with ARF. If you would like to suggest an agenda item or if you would like to attend the meeting, please contact Don Mathre (587-8666 or upldm@montana.edu) or me. The Executive Committee will submit its agenda soon. You can also send your $15 dues to Don if you haven’t already done so. His address is 731 South 12th Ave, Bozeman, MT 59715.

I hope each of your days during retirement is peaceful, interesting, and enjoyable.

Best wishes,
Marty Hamilton, ARF President