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1. Happy New Year—2021.3%. Last month, the Office of Personnel Management sent out its “Season’s Greetings” letting Federal retirees know that starting January 2, FERS and CSRS would receive a 1.3% cost of living increase. The Social Security Administration had also announced the same increase (1.3%) for social security recipients. These increases are tied to the Department of Labor Consumer Price Index (CPI-W). The standard monthly premium for Medicare Part B enrollees will be \$148.50 for 2021, an increase of \$3.90 from \$144.60 in 2020. The annual deductible for all Medicare Part B beneficiaries is \$203 in 2021, an increase of \$5 from the annual deductible of \$198 in 2020.

2. Cost of Living Adjustments to Federal Retirement Plans/Social Security. Is the cost of living increase for seniors just 1.3%? Changes to Federal pensions and social security are based on the CPI-W (as noted above). The National Association of Retired Federal Employees believes that seniors would be more fairly treated if the government calculated the cost of living based on Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E) which takes into account the rising health costs elderly persons have, which are often double what the general population pays. A bill was introduced in the House of Representatives (HR 1553) which has 39 bipartisan cosponsors. To see the complete list of cosponsors, visit: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1553/all-info> If your representative is not listed—you can contact him/her and urge his/her support for HR 1553.

3. The Federal Trade Commission launches a Scam Reporting Website. Last year, the FTC set up a new website to make it easier to report potential frauds to federal authorities and get advice on what to do. It can be found at: www.ReportFraud.ftc.gov The FTC found that seniors were far more susceptible to “romance scams” losing over \$84 million last year.

4. Member Spotlight. Jeannette Ferguson, an FEA retired member, was a student teacher at London Central High School and a full time employee at Yokota Middle School. She was also the NEATA President in the Pacific. She left DoDEA and works as a financial planner in Washington State. After participating in the Zoom meeting on financial planning (by NEA-Member Benefits) last month, Jeannette reached out to FEA-Retired about a change in Washington State, that may be copied elsewhere. Washington State passed a law adding a tax to those currently working (on a W-2). The tax will pay for workers’ enrollment in a long term care program. The tax will be collected in 2022 and benefits would not be paid out until 2025. (One could opt out in 2021 if they have their own LTC plan. Forbes Magazine has summarized the program (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/howardgleckman/2019/05/15/what-you-need-to-know-about-washington-states-public-long-term-care-insurance-program/?sh=72fc982d2cdc>) Other states (such as California, Illinois and Michigan) are looking into this first of the nation

program. Many thanks to Jeannette for sharing this information and being available to answer questions (Jeannette.ferguson@nm.com).

5. Indoor Dining? Jane Varalli, an FEA-Retired members in Florida, and former culinary arts teacher, shared information on how to dine safely at restaurants. It is important to make sure that cutlery is safe and wrapped, no-shared condiments, and employees wearing gloves and masks. To see more important tips, she recommended checking out this AARP's article: <https://www.aarp.org/health/healthy-living/info-2020/coronavirus-dining-out-checklist.html>

6. Q-Not-Anonymous: We want to hear from you again—so here is our *question of the month*: What is the one best single advice, as a retired FEA member, would you give to active FEA members in planning for and getting ready for retirement. What factors should educators consider that will make the transition so much easier. We will share those ideas with our active membership. (Let us know if we can use your name.) Again, our contact information is retiredFEA@gmail.com
