



Sun 19 Feb 2012

Great to see you all at yesterday's meeting!

NEW FACES

- Aaron Hachez
- Kirstin Oremus
- several visiting therapy students from Green River Community College and the UW

Good to see you, folks, and we hope you can come again.

SSD LAWYER JOHN-PAUL GUSTAD

Obtaining Social Security Disability benefits (SSD) involves navigating a maze of federal bureaucracy. JP Gustad is a lawyer who can help you cut through all the red tape, get accurate information, and secure the benefits you are entitled to. Here are just a few highlights from his informative and entertaining talk:

- ◆ If you are unable to earn more than \$1010 per month and your condition lasts for at least 12 months, you are eligible for SSD. Apply at www.ssa.gov or 800-772-1213.
- ◆ It is important to apply early, even if you aren't sure you will need it. It's easy to withdraw later.
- ◆ Benefits range from \$693 per month to \$2300 per month depending on your work history.
- ◆ Medicare or Medicaid comes along with SSD, and provides you with continuity of care. Medicare takes effect 29 months after the onset of disability.
- ◆ SSD will normally continue as long as your income from other sources remains below \$1010/month.
- ◆ You are eligible for benefits if you have work history, regardless of your spouse's earnings.
- ◆ SSD benefits convert to normal retirement benefits at retirement age. This generally means a small decrease in benefits.
- ◆ JP's fees are on a contingency basis, so there is no fee if you do not receive a benefit. If you do, his fee is 25% of back benefits up to a limit of \$6000. There is no charge to contact him with questions any time.

Mr. Gustad showed a genuine concern for people in need, and has helped Alice Hanson in our group receive her SSD benefits. He provides a valuable service, taking over the difficult, confusing, and time-consuming task of dealing with the Social Security Administration so you can concentrate on your rehab. Contact him at JP@GustadLaw.com or 206-533-2222.

LUKE REYNOLDS COFFEE SEMINAR

Our wonderful volunteer coordinator Luke Reynolds gave us a great talk about coffee. This has nothing to do with stroke, of course, but it's a highlight of many people's day! Luke spent a year in Nicaragua on a coffee plantation and is now a barrista at Starbucks, so he is definitely an expert.

- ◆ Coffee grows in tropical or mountainous regions. Even in Seattle, people have coffee trees for indoor plants.
- ◆ Coffee originated in Ethiopia, in the northeast horn of Africa, and is now grown worldwide.
- ◆ Coffee is the second most traded (legal) commodity worldwide, behind only oil.
- ◆ Coffee berries look very much like cranberries. These are harvested and pressed to pop out the two beans inside, which are then fermented to remove the gooey mucilage coating, washed, and roasted. It's a very labor- and water-intensive process.
- ◆ Starbucks is a great company. They actually spend more on employees' health care than on coffee itself, they kept many thousands of coffee farmers in business during the market slump in the 90's, and they are the world's largest fair-trade coffee buyer. So raise a toast to them with your next double latte!

Luke passed around samples of two different coffee varieties, and some bean samples from the processing steps between raw and roasted. Thanks a million, Luke!

NORTH CASCADES SUMMER DAY TRIP

Dianne and Laura Cubell and John Brace are organizing another day trip by Greyhound, this time to Washington Pass in the North Cascades. See http://ncwportal.com/okanogan/interest/washington_pass_overlook for some pictures and details about this lovely spot. John told us more about it and passed out flyers. Contact Dianne at 206-726-1799 if you'd like to buy seats or raffle tickets for this beautiful trip. We planned on having the raffle drawing at this meeting, but it looks like you'll have another month for that.

ROBUST LIFE CENTER

Robust Life Center is a holistic nutritional healing center near Northgate, recommended by Judy Rowley's friend Rochelle. She let us know about free lectures there on Wednesday evenings. Call 206-365-1030 for more information.

AUGUST PICNIC HOSTS?

If you can host the YASS August picnic, let me know. Sharon Leitheiser volunteered in the meeting but that may not work out.

SAVE A STAMP, SAVE A TREE

Please let me know if you want to go email only and opt out of receiving group mailings by postal mail. Help reduce the burden on the American Heart Association, which does our mailings for us. Let me know (contact info below).

Thanks to everyone for a great meeting. See you next time!

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