



T R E N D

(Thinking Retired Employees Need Direction)
Retired Employees of Kern County

Volume MMIX-V

September-October 2009

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As retirees, most of us are greatly concerned about our health and income for our remaining years, both of which are being targeted as partial reasons for the current financial difficulties by our State and Federal politicians. Established retirement funds seem to be very tempting “wells” in which to “dip” for many who work on balancing budgets. We cannot trust our future to anyone but ourselves and so we must remain vigilant in protecting our health and income. Stay as informed as possible, contact your representatives (both State and Federal) any way that’s available to you, i.e., phone, letters, email or in person; make your needs and wishes known!

Your organization, REOKC (Retired Employees of Kern County), will continue to monitor initiatives and bills which may put us in jeopardy and we will attempt to keep you informed as quickly and often as possible when threats and changes occur. We encourage all of you to communicate with family and friends to keep them informed and to make your concerns known to them. There is more information on page 2 concerning the McCauley initiatives. Petitions will most likely be circulated in order to get enough signatures to place these and other initiatives on the ballots. Everyone is encouraged to read all petitions before signing, know what you’re signing and DO NOT sign McCauley’s petition! If you know of any retirees who are not yet members of REOKC, please encourage them to join us; the more members we have, the stronger and more influential we will be in achieving our goals and protecting our benefits.

Fall is fast approaching and that means we will soon be holding elections to replace the Officers and Directors who will be leaving the REOKC Board this December. The slate of nominees will be presented to the Board at the October 13th meeting. Elections will then be held during the general membership meeting on November 10th, followed by the installation of Officers/Directors at our Christmas luncheon on December 8th. If you are interested in serving on the Board, or if you know of someone who is interested, please contact me at 589-3744 and I will make sure the Nominating Committee gets the information.

The second Tuesday of each month is our luncheon/meeting day (see page 3 for dates, times and the menus). In addition to good food and visiting with old and new friends, some former co-workers, we always have some type of entertainment or speakers with a wide variety of topics to keep us informed. If you were at our August luncheon, I’m sure you enjoyed the wonderful voice of vocalist, Aaron Gallington. For our September meeting, our speaker will be Maggie Kalar, Marketing and Promotions Associate, Volunteer Coordinator with Kern County Animal Control. In October, Raymond McDonald, soloist and guitar player will be entertaining us. If you are a new member and have not been to one of our luncheon/meetings or you just haven’t thought about attending for while, make plans now to join us. You can use the reservation forms on the last page of this newsletter for the September and/or the October luncheons.

Just a reminder - please contact Josie De La Torre (661)303-6291 if you know of any of our members or their families who could use a get-well or sympathy card.

Hope to see you at some of the upcoming luncheon/meetings!

Jeanne



YOUR RETIREMENT BOARD

by Phil Franey

As I discussed in the last edition of *The Trend* (www.reokc.org), Paul McCauley had two proposed initiatives approved for signatures. The first proposed initiative, **The McCauley Public Pension Reform Act** that would have allowed state and local governments to change the terms of existing pension agreements has failed to obtain the necessary signatures for a ballot initiative. The second proposed initiative, **The McCauley Pension Recovery Act** that creates a new tax on California residents who receive more than \$40,000 annually from pensions distributions, social security, and the cash value of health care benefits (plus a one-time tax on those living outside California whose pensions exceed \$50,000 in a year and who earned income in the state before they retired) has until October 15th to collect the required signatures. If the second initiative fails, there will be other attempts to attack pension and health benefits. As a matter of fact, Sacramento politicians (the dazed and confused) are targeting pension and health costs as the cause for their ineptness. We know that pension and healthcare costs are a burden for state and local budgets, but they should not be used as the excuse for mismanagement and poor stewardship. As Sacramento continues to take more from schools, counties, cities, and special districts, the budget becomes greater and never in balance. According to the *Kiplinger Retirement Report* (August 2009), California not only fully taxes most retirement income, but has the highest top tax brackets in the nation. Furthermore, California's newly increased statewide sales tax of 8.25% is the highest sales tax in the nation. Rather than continue my tirade, the following letter from retiree Robert Yoon explains his viewpoint on this issue. We appreciate Robert's comments and would like to share them with other retirees:

Proposed McCauley Pension Recovery Act is Bad for California

I recently had breakfast with a bunch of retirees from the Sheriff's Department. During the breakfast, the conversation logically drifted to a discussion about the proposed initiative entitled the "McCauley Pension Recovery Act." It struck me as odd that none of us really knew who Paul McCauley was and why he had such hard feelings toward public employee pensions. As we all continued to talk about what we felt would be the results of such an act, should it make it to a California ballot, I thought of a conversation I had with some of my relatives at a family gathering a while back.

My sister, who is a business owner struggling in a depressed economy, thought that the McCauley initiative was a good thing and was hoping that if it passed, her tax liability would go down, thus she could save something for her eventual retirement. For whatever reason, the general public is relatively ignorant to what we public employee retirees did to earn our retirements, nor do they really want to know, I suspect. The average private sector working class citizen has no idea why public employees enjoy such "rich" retirement benefits. To them, we are a bunch of lazy, former government employees, who are now suckling on the breast of the tax paying citizens of the State of California and all it's various public entities.

I do know that the general mood of the retirees I talk to is that if this bill should make it to the ballot, and (gasp!) pass, there will be a mass exodus of retired government employees out of the State of California. Even the State Treasurer's office acknowledges that this law would "change the behavior" of government retirees to the point that the taxes recovered after passage would generally reduce each year as retirees fled the state.

Let's look at this realistically. With real estate values in the cellar, how can any retiree afford to live in California if his/her income tax bill quadruples over night? Because we can't sell our houses for what they are mortgaged for, I fear foreclosures will increase as retirees walk away from their homes. That will reduce the amount of property taxes going to the cities, counties, and state. Sales tax revenue will take a hit as those retirees start spending their money in their new home states. Likewise, vehicle registration fees and gas taxes will also be reduced proportionately. It is reasonable to assume that in a few short years after enactment, this bill would actually cost the state coffers more money than it would initially bring in. Alas, this is a point lost on most of the general public, as well as many future government retirees, still struggling to make a living in spite of furlough days and wage reductions.

This initiative is something that we, as government retirees, can't ignore. It threatens the very way of life that we enjoy right now. We need to make sure that we continue to monitor this initiative and that we educate our friends and neighbors as to the true ramifications of this act should it make it to a polling station near you! This proposed act is a "Lose/Lose" scenario for the state and us retirees. You can bet that I'll be leaving California, pronto, should the McCauley Pension Recovery Act become law!

Submitted by

Robert C. Yoon
 Sheriff's Dept. Retiree
 Bakersfield, CA

DO YOU HAVE INTERNET ACCESS?

TREND EMAIL LIST IS GROWING

Thanks to all of you who have signed up for membership in the TREND Email list. We are almost up to saving **\$3,200.00 per year** and that's not chump change!

We need to keep this "trend" going. :)
So, if you have internet access, please email Norman Briggs to sign up and help our budget.

To receive the TREND newsletter electronically:

Send an email to **briggs1937@sbcglobal.net** with your name, current mailing address and your email address. (Subject: TREND mailing list). OR:

Send a letter with your name and email address to:
REOKC
P.O. Box 2592
Bakersfield, CA 93303

Host/Hostess Program

During the month of June 2009, 35 volunteers worked 108 hours assisting 1,011 visitors at the County Administrative Building.

During the month of July 2009, 33 volunteers worked 99 hours assisting 814 visitors at the County Administrative Building.

Since 1992 our volunteers have assisted more than 275,000 visitors to the County Administrative Complex at 1115 Truxtun Ave.!

There is always a need for additional volunteers.
Please contact **Mary Lou at 871-5270** if interested.

SMILE !!

- By the time people have money to burn, the pilot light has gone out.
- Anyone can buy new things, but only a strong person can throw old things out.
- The worst thing about history, is that every time it repeats itself, the price goes up.
- Happiness isn't always found in searching for it.
- It can come quietly when you are serving others.



Sept. 8	REOKC Board Meeting Norris Road Veteran's Hall	10:00 am
Sept. 8	REOKC General Meeting Lunch served Norris Road Veteran's Hall	11:30 am 12:00 noon
Sept. 9	KCERA-Investment Board Meeting County Admin. Bldg.	8:30 am
Sept. 23	KCERA-Board Meeting County Admin. Bldg.	8:30 am

October 13	REOKC Board Meeting Norris Road Veteran's Hall	10:00 am
October 13	REOKC General Meeting Lunch served Norris Road Veteran's Hall	11:30 am 12:00 noon
October 14	KCERA-Investment Board Meeting County Admin. Bldg.	8:30 am
October 28	KCERA-Board Meeting County Admin. Bldg.	8:30 am

LUNCHEON MENUS



September 8th, 2009

- Meatloaf
- Mashed Potatoes—Peas and Carrots
- Tomato-Cucumber Salad — Rolls
- Apple Cobbler
- Iced Tea, Coffee, Water

October 13th, 2009

- Swiss Steak
- Country Potatoes—Green Beans
- Broccoli Salad — Rolls
- Cherry Cobbler
- Iced Tea, Coffee, Water

**PAYROLL DEDUCTION FOR
MONTHLY LUNCHEON**

SAVE A BUCK!!

If you sign up for payroll deduction for your luncheon cost, you will only be charged \$4.00. If you buy a ticket at the luncheon, it will cost \$5.00.

**AUTHORIZATION FOR DEDUCTION
RETIRED EMPLOYEES OF KERN COUNTY,
INC. MEMBERSHIP DUES**

I hereby authorize and direct you to deduct five dollars (\$5.00) per month from my pension warrant as an additional elective payment to the Retired Employees of Kern County, Inc. This deduction shall commence with the next pension payment. I understand that this authorization and membership in the Retired Employees of Kern County, Inc. organization is voluntary and may be revoked by me, in writing, at any time in the future.

Name _____ Social Security # _____

Signature _____ Date signed _____

(Send to: KCERA, 1115 Truxtun Ave., Bakersfield, CA 93301-4639)

**Application for Membership in REOKC
and Authorization for Deduction of Dues**

I receive a retirement and/or survivor's allowance from Kern County. I hereby authorize the Kern County Employees' Retirement Association to deduct from my monthly retirement benefits, dues of one-dollar (\$1.00) per month for my membership in REOKC, and to pay such deductions monthly to that organization.

Name (print) _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Telephone () _____

SSN _____

Signature _____ Date _____

(Send to: KCERA, 1115 Truxtun Ave., Bakersfield, CA 93301-4639)



"WELCOME!"

**NEW MEMBERS OF THE
RETIRED EMPLOYEES OF
KERN COUNTY**

Carolyn Bass—Mental Health; William Cooper—Library; Douglas Diggles—Sheriff; Terry Fleming – Probation; Elva Gonzalez—KMC; Darrell Hevle –KMC; Penny Johnson—Human Services; Leslie Lee—D.A.; Thomas Lindsay—Human Services; Susan Rajlal—Waste Mgmt. Enterprise; Michael Rascoe—Sheriff; Nancy Webb—Mental Health

Beneficiaries:

Bonnie Anderson—Roads; Patricia Curry—Aging & Adult Services; Terry Flick—General Services; Brenda Herron—Parks & Recreation; Helen Wheeler—Fire Dept.



**WE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER
OUR DECEASED REOKC MEMBERS:**

- Ethel Abbott—KMC
- Cleo Agness—Health Dept.
- Larry Anderson—Roads
- Francis Armstrong—KMC
- Elza Bridges—Ag. & Measurement
- Lynn Burnett—Probation
- Corene Campbell—KMC
- Julia Desimone—Superior Court
- Jerry Flick—General Services
- Delbert Gibson—General Services
- Nelson Harris—Waste Mgmt. Enterprise
- Rebecca Hellerud—KMC
- Christine Lockhart—Sheriff
- Marjorie Murphree—Superior Court
- Helen Ortega—County Clerk Elections
- James Peterson—Fire
- Helen Rurup—Human Services
- Jane Sinal—Human Services
- Ruth Smock—County Clerk-Public Services
- Boyd Sneed—Airports-Enterprise Fund
- Elizabeth Trivett—General Services
- Roy Trivett—Probation
- Gary Wheeler—Fire

KERN COUNTY HISTORY



BUTTONWILLOW TREE

Summer dust storms and smoke from Indian campfires were the predominant pollutants in the San Joaquin Valley during the early 1800s and before.

The Buttonwillow tree (as it is called today), twenty miles west of Bakersfield, is a symbolic throwback to that pristine time. The Tuohe tribe of Yokut Indians called the tree “Hahlu”. The Hahlu tree was a gathering place where they held tribal rites, planned hunting parties and other activities. The Hahlu tree was renamed Buttonwillow by white settlers who later infiltrated Yokut territory.

An old Miller and Lux map showed the present town of Buttonwillow was named Buena Vista, predicated on its proximity to the Buena Vista Slough. Stockmen emulated Yokut Indians by rendezvousing at the tree where they held their spring rodeos.

Miller and Lux established a ranch headquarters near the tree in 1885. A trail from Bakersfield to ranch headquarters became a well traveled Kern County road. The town of Buttonwillow was well established by 1895. A railroad was laid in 1896 for steam locomotives that huffed and puffed back and forth between Bakersfield and McKittrick. The track passed within a few hundred yards of the Buttonwillow tree.

Buttonwillow has been home to many outstanding Italian families who have farmed the land since early times. Any person who enjoys historic sites may consider a leisurely Sunday afternoon drive to Buttonwillow and relive history by visiting the historic Buttonwillow tree.

By **WALTER E. STEWART**

WISDOM!!

One of the biggest differences between parents and grandparents is that parents say “No” better.

The more you talk about your troubles the harder it is to find somebody who will listen.



“HELPING HANDS” PROFILES

Dave Merritt

Know how to beat the Bakersfield summer heat? Dave certainly knows the secret. Currently, he’s up in northern Idaho where he is fishing, boating, taking life easy (and working some, so he says). He probably feels right at home in the northwest area, having been born in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

His extensive educational record is indicative of his thirst for knowledge and his drive to achieve his personal goals. He graduated from Las Vegas H.S., attended Nevada Southern University, graduated from Bakersfield College with an AA in Criminal Justice, graduated from the FBI National Academy in 1981, graduated from the University of LaVerne with a Bachelor of Science in Public Administration and finally graduated from the College of Financial Planning and held a Certified Financial Planner License.

Dave and Irene’s marriage of over 45 years has produced two children, six grandchildren and four great grandchildren. Knowing their love for the current dog in their lives, there no doubt have been several included as part of their “family” throughout the years.

Dave’s career with Kern County began in 1968 as a Reserve Deputy Sheriff. He took a permanent position in 1969 and retired from the Sheriff’s Department in 2000 as a Commander. He became an active member of REOKC (Retired Employees of Kern County) in 2000; was President for two years (2002-2003), served on the Board as Past President for three years and has been REOKC’s Delegate to the California Retired County Employees Association since 2003.

His hobbies consist of cycling, oil painting (for which he’s becoming well-known), amateur radio, fishing, reading and naps (not necessarily in that order). Those of you who are fortunate enough to know Dave will probably agree he’s full of it (fun, that is)! Dave, we wish you a long and healthy life, filled with lots of love and laughter!!



HEALTHY NOTES

by Audrey Cochran, APRN,BC,CCCN

There are many reasons TREND readers need to write letters and make phone calls to their legislators about the problems with proposed health insurance changes. The Aug. 2 **Bakersfield Californian** had a couple of articles in the "Sunday Forum." One was by Dr. Girish Patel giving comparative survival rates for various forms of cancer in the US compared to other countries. I hear similar things when I travel on AMTRAK and eat meals with tourists from England, Canada or Australia. "Yes, we have national health insurance, but those of us who can afford it also buy private insurance so we can get the care we need without waiting for months or years for hip surgery, for example."

The second article was by Gwen Olsen, a former sales rep for three pharmaceutical giants, and author of "Confessions of an Rx Drug Pusher." She says, "The pharmaceutical industry has roughly 1100 lobbyists to represent their interests in Washington. When I left the pharmaceutical industry in 2000 to enter the natural foods industry, I never dreamed that many of the health symptoms I suffered from were directly related to my access to and use of the health care system I had worked in for 15 years."

U.S. News & World Report, not exactly a conservative source of information, Aug. 3 reported that Pelosi and President Obama's political strategy ace, David Axelrod, held a closed-door meeting with House Democrats. So the speaker is sending her troops home with cheat sheets -- pocket-sized cards, similar to the ones the ward-healers hand out on election day. They list the reasons the Democrats think their health care bill should be enacted. The selling points are tailored for each member's district, [emphasis added] with numbers of constituents who would come off the rolls of the uninsured, avoid being bankrupted by medical bills, etc. It is also common for pre-election mailers to promise anything precinct demographics suggest those particular voters want to hear. The legislation which follows the election may be far different.

My personal objection to the proposal is on moral grounds. When pro-life OB-GYNs were polled, 67% said they would leave their profession rather than perform abortions. Like them, I respect life from conception to natural death.

The section of the bill (HR 3200) in question, which has been the topic of heated discussion on the Geriatric Care Managers List-serve of which I am a member, can be found on page 424 at the following website: <http://thehill.com/images/stories/news/2009/june/getdoc-1.cgi.pdf>

Under SEC. 1233. ADVANCE CARE PLANNING CONSULTATION, (a) MEDICARE line 20 begins a description of the decisions involved, responsibilities of a health care proxy, national and State-specific resources to assist in planning, and (E) an explanation by the practitioner of the continuum of end-of-life services and supports available, including palliative care and hospice, and benefits for such services and supports that are available under this title. It sounds like a 30 minute discussion which practitioners might not take the time to do properly. This has been heralded as "an additional benefit" but has great potential for misuse, based on stories and experiences my nurse friends on the board of a national professional organization have had of the dying even being denied ice chips or a damp washcloth to slake their thirst.

There are two forms of advance directives in use. One is called a "Living Will." A Living Will is generally described as a signed, witnessed declaration instructing a physician to withhold or withdraw medical treatment from its signer if he or she is in a terminal condition and is unable to make decisions about medical treatment. It also gives a physician complete immunity from civil or criminal liability for his or her action or inactions. Can you imagine the money this will save for HMOs!

Rather than use the "Advance Directive" stating what you do or don't want, it's far safer to prepare a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care naming trusted family members or friends. They should each have a copy of this document. Or you could go to various pro-life websites for resources such as <http://www.all.org/article.php?id=10171> the American Life Lobby's website containing the "Loving Will" and a complete explanation. Their form is downloadable and free although they would appreciate an offering for it.

We certainly thank Audrey Cochran for her timely and informative articles, all of which take a great deal of time and research. Thank you so much, Audrey!!

NOTICE: The information presented in the TREND is believed to be from reliable sources. However, no responsibility is assumed by REOKC, the Editor, or the writers for inaccuracies in the articles published.

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Kern County Admin. Center



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Bakersfield, CA 93303

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Time Dated Material

Official Newsletter of
The Retired Employees of Kern County Inc.

September Luncheon Reservation

September 8th, 2009 at 11:30 a.m., Veterans' Hall, **400 NORRIS ROAD**. If you wish, you may use this form to order tickets for this luncheon. Please send your check, made payable to **REOKC**, together with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Brenda Preston, 5817 Lenz Court, Bakersfield, CA 93307-5579. Deadline for reservations is the Wednesday prior to the luncheon (09/02/09). Phone reservations are not accepted. You may cancel your reservations by calling Brenda at (661) 835-0294 prior to the deadline. Cancellations after the deadline cannot be refunded.

Member's name (\$5.00) _____ Spouse(\$5.00) _____

Guest (\$8.00) _____ Total tickets _____ Amount enclosed \$ _____

October Luncheon Reservation

October 13th, 2009 at 11:30 a.m., Veterans' Hall, **400 NORRIS ROAD**. If you wish, you may use this form to order tickets for this luncheon. Please send your check, made payable to **REOKC**, together with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Brenda Preston, 5817 Lenz Court, Bakersfield, CA 93307-5579. Deadline for reservations is the Wednesday prior to the luncheon (10/07/09). Phone reservations are not accepted. You may cancel your reservations by calling Brenda at (661) 835-0294 prior to the deadline. Cancellations after the deadline cannot be refunded.

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