



# T R E N D

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

Volume MMXVIII-III

May & June 2018

www.reokc.org

John De Mario, President

M. L. Bennett, Editor (mlbennett36@sbcglobal.net)



## President's Message

### JOHN DE MARIO

*Our mission is to promote the education and earned benefits of all retirees of Kern County, advocate the safeguarding and continuation of Kern County retiree pension and health benefits, provide avenues of support and information for Kern County retirees and beneficiaries, ensure proper and necessary representation on the Kern County Board of Retirement, and participate as an integral contributor in our Kern County communities' quality of life.*

I sincerely hope that you and your family had a pleasant Easter and that you didn't lose as many painted eggs as my great grandson did. We started Easter day with three dozen eggs and by dinner we had only 31 eggs, of which 4 were beyond usage and considered DOA, the remaining eggs gave their lives for the good of the family in the form of deviled eggs. Having family around you and watching four generations discussing current events and enjoying each other's company is the greatest feeling on earth.

As I stated in the last issue of the TREND, the Kern County Employees Retirement Association (KCERA) Board was to vote on the creation of a new benefit called SRBR Tier 4 valued at \$21 per month for all employees hired prior to July 1, 2018. On March 14, 2018, the KCERA Board voted to not only create the new SRBR 4 benefit but to also increase the purchasing power benefit from 80% to 82%. Your REOKC was the organization that kept pushing for these benefits over the last three years in what, at some times, seemed to be almost impossible odds. If it were not for the many REOKC members that supported these benefits with their presence at the endless meetings and endless hours of work that was required, there would not be an additional benefit; so thank you for your help and support. It has taken over 15 years to gain that which was due KCERA members for a long time.

The new SRBR 4 benefit of \$21 dollars will be reflected on your retirement checks on July 31, 2018, while

the COLA increase of 2.5% for 2018 should be reflected on the April 30, 2018 check. Remember any time your retirement checks increase, your taxes also increase.

As a note to all KCERA members, also at the March 14, 2018 meeting, the KCERA Board appointed Mr. Dominic Brown as Executive Director of KCERA effective immediately. REOKC has extended an invitation to Mr. Brown to attend an upcoming luncheon to introduce himself and to brief the members of REOKC on what he sees as the future of your retirement system.

To change the subject, your REOKC Board on April 10, 2018, voted to change the amount of the monthly lunch to \$6.00 for REOKC members that have the lunch ticket deducted from their monthly checks, and to \$7.00 for REOKC members that purchase lunch tickets through the mail or at the door, and \$10.00 for a guest that attends with an REOKC member. There will be no change to the free lunch in July for all members, and the Christmas lunch will remain at \$10.00 for members only, no guests. This is the first increase in the monthly lunch tickets in more than ten years; REOKC has absorbed the additional cost over the years, but with the new increases in the State minimum wage and the general increase in all items including food, REOKC must finally take action to change the lunch ticket rates. To allow for lead time to make changes, the new rates will go into effect on July 1, 2018 and appear on the July 31, 2018 check. For you members that DO NOT want the lunch tickets to be deducted from your check, there is a form in the TREND (page 4), which must be completed and returned to REOKC, requesting that the lunch deduction no longer be taken; for members that may want to have the deduction started, the same form can be used to authorize the deduction. To give you an idea of how the monthly luncheons have changed over the last twenty years, it started as a brown bag gathering of 50-60 members and has grown to include 200+ members for a full sit down lunch.

One last note, REOKC is watching 22 bills introduced in the California Legislature that will make changes to retirement systems, most of these are minor changes requested by a retirement system to clarify current law, but there is one bill, SB 1031, that would require the Retirement System STOP paying COLA if the fund is less than 80% funded. SB 1031 as written, would eliminate our

(President's Message concluded on page 3)



## KCERA Retirement Board

By

Phil Franey, KCERA Retiree Trustee

***“A retirement system board’s duty to the system’s participants and their beneficiaries shall take precedence over any other duty” (Section 17(b) of Article XVI of the California Constitution).***

I hope everyone enjoyed St. Patrick’s Day and had a Happy Easter. I also wish everyone a safe Memorial Day with family and friends.

Over the past few months the KCERA Board has interviewed and hired both a new KCERA Executive Director and a Chief Investment Officer. **Dominic Brown** was hired as Executive Director after serving as the KCERA Acting Executive Director, KCERA Assistant Executive Director, Kern County Auditor-Controller Division Chief, Lennar Homes Assistant Controller, and positions at local CPA firms. **Daryn Miller** was hired as Chief Investment Officer after serving as the City of San Jose’s Interim Chief Investment Officer at two defined benefit pension plans, valued at approximately \$6 billion. He also managed San Jose’s global equity asset class after five years at Goldman Sachs as Vice President in equity research. With the placement of needed management and investment leadership, the KCERA Board is implementing needed changes to administrative and investment operations in serving our membership and sponsors.

During the March and April 2018 KCERA Board Meetings, other than approving consent items (routine and non-controversial), the Board received presentations and took appropriate action on the following agenda items: distribution of available SRBR funds (explained later in this article), report on Sustainable Growth Advisers Partnership Announcement, trustee education regarding Eligibility for Retirement, report on Declining Employer Payroll Policy, KCERA Governance Report for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2017, KCERA voting delegation for the State Association of County Retirement Systems (SACRS) May Conference, proposed 2018-19 slate of candidates for SACRS, and KCERA Liquidity Review.

During the August 2017 Financial Committee Meeting, Segal Consulting (KCERA Actuary) presented a proposed Supplemental Retiree Benefit Reserve (SRBR) Benefit Improvement. This was the result of another of many REOKC requests to the KCERA Board to allocate available SRBR funds with a reserve balance exceeding 200%. As a reminder and concerning the Board’s fidu-

ciary responsibility, until now the KCERA Board majority had failed for more than 15 years to act according to law in authorizing the allocations of available SRBR funds, other than two minor changes to the death benefit.

Although not obtaining everything your REOKC Board requested, we finally succeeded with the KCERA Board approving the allocation of available SRBR funds. KCERA retirees and future retirees hired before July 1, 2018 will be eligible for benefits including an increase of SRBR Tier 3 purchasing power from 80% to 82% with an inflation cap of 4% and a \$21 per month increase to eligible retirees. Beneficiary benefits will be adjusted according to current provisions of law. **Understand, KCERA administration will provide all official information and answer questions regarding this matter.** Your REOKC Board will continue to request additional allocation of available SRBR funds since the reserve balance will be 138% funded after implementation of the mentioned changes.

As a reminder, your April pension payment will include a Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) rate of 2.5% to be applied to all retirees and beneficiaries. As always, direct all questions concerning your COLA to KCERA Administration.

During the February Board meeting Verus (Investment Consultant) presentation included the fund balance and investment performance (net of fees) for the period ending December 31, 2017 as follows:

Total Assets - \$4,159,887,840  
1 Year – 13.7% (returns net of fees)  
3 Years - 6.8%  
5 Years - 7.6%  
10 Years – 4.3%

As of June 30, 2017, the assumption rate is 7.25% (expected long-term return) and funding ratio is 63.2% (fund assets available to pay liabilities).

As of March 31, 2018, membership was 17,353; active - 8,887; retirees and beneficiaries - 7,106 (REOKC is more than 5,000 of those members); and deferred and reciprocal - 1,360. More detailed information and reporting may be obtained from the KCERA website at [www.kcera.org](http://www.kcera.org). All members are encouraged to attend Retirement Board Meetings on the second Wednesday of each month.

### **AS YOU GET OLDER CONSIDER THIS:**

Today is the oldest you’ve ever been; yet the youngest you’ll ever be, so enjoy this day while it lasts.

## DO YOU HAVE INTERNET ACCESS?

### TREND EMAIL LIST CONTINUES TO GROW!

Thanks to all of you who have signed up for membership in the TREND Email list. We are almost up to saving **\$3,475.00 per year** and that's not chump change!

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

*To receive the TREND newsletter electronically:*  
Send an email to [mlbennett36@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mlbennett36@sbcglobal.net) with your name, current mailing address and your email address. (Subject: TREND mailing list).

### President's Message—concluded from Page 1

COLA as KCERA is only funded at 63% currently, but with much work and coordination with other retirement systems, the bill has been modified in the last week to exclude current employed and retired members of a retirement system and thus only applies to future members hired after 01-01-2019. REOKC is doing what it can to help kill this bill even though it may not affect us at this time, you can never tell if it might be changed at the last minute.

I want to wish you and your family a happy Memorial Day and ask that you remember all our veterans on this day of respect. We hope to see you at our next meeting on May 8, 2018, and please, if you know a KCERA member who is not a member of REOKC, point out to them that this organization is the only one looking out for retirees and we need the support of all members.

### ~ JOB INTERVIEW ~

Reaching the end of a job interview, the human resources person asked a young engineer fresh out of MIT what kind of salary she was looking for.

The young applicant responded, "In the neighborhood of \$140,000 a year, depending on the benefits package."

"Well, what would you say to a package of 5 weeks vacation, 14 paid holidays, full medical and dental, a company matching retirement fund to 50% of salary and a company car leased every 2 years...say a red BMW?"

"Wow! Are you kidding?"

"Yeah, but you started it."

3

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**May 8 REOKC Board Meeting** 9:30 am  
Hodel's, Carriage Room, 5917 Knudsen Dr.

**May 8 REOKC Lunch** 11:30 am—noon  
General Meeting 12:00 noon  
Hodel's, Kern Room, 5917 Knudsen Dr.

**May 9 KCERA Board Meeting**  
Investment/Regular Board 8:30 am  
KCERA Office, 11125 River Run Blvd., Bakersfield

\*\*\*\*\*

**June 12 REOKC Board Meeting** 9:30 am  
Hodel's, Carriage Room, 5917 Knudsen Dr.

**June 12 REOKC Lunch** 11:30 am—noon  
General Meeting 12:00 noon  
Hodel's, Kern Room, 5917 Knudsen Dr.

**June 13 KCERA Board Meeting**  
Investment/Regular Board 8:30 am  
KCERA Office, 11125 River Run Blvd., Bakersfield

## UPCOMING REOKC PROGRAMS

### May 8, 2018:

- Our speaker will be **Cassandra Deras-Coker**, Program Specialist—Crisis Administration with Behavioral Health & Recovery Services.

### June 12, 2018:

- Tammy Davis** with the Bakersfield City Animal Shelter will be our speaker.

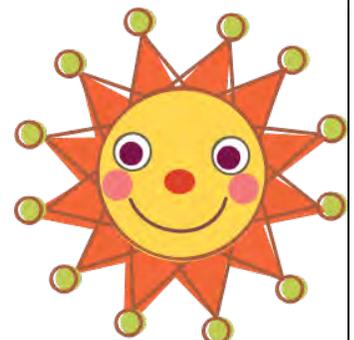
## LUNCHEON MENU AT HODEL'S



Selections:

- 1 Beef Entrée
- 1 Chicken Entrée
- 5 Different Salads
- 3 Different Desserts

Coffee, Tea & Water  
will be on each table



## PAYROLL DEDUCTION FORM

To sign up for (or stop) payroll deduction, check the box(es) below, complete the form, and submit it to REOKC.

- REOKC Luncheon Payment**  
By checking this box, I authorize KCERA to deduct \$4.00 per month from my pension benefit as an additional elective payment to REOKC. This deduction shall begin with my next pension payment.

*(Sign up for the luncheon payroll deduction and save \$1.00 per meal!)*

- REOKC Membership Dues**  
By checking this box, I authorize KCERA to deduct \$2.00 per month from my pension benefit as dues for my REOKC membership and to pay that organization. This deduction shall begin with my next pension payment. I understand my authorization and REOKC membership are voluntary and may be revoked by me, in writing, at any time.

Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Clip out completed form and send to:*

**REOKC / PO Box 2592 / Bakersfield, CA / 93303**

### **STOP DEDUCTION(S)**

- Check box to stop your deduction for the luncheon.
- Check box to stop your deduction for REOKC membership dues.



**"WELCOME!"**

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

**ANIMAL CONTROL:** Fred May

**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH:** Mike Lyons

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:** Marion E. Mitchell

**COUNTY COUNSEL:** Charles F. Collins

**EMPLOYERS' TRG. RESOURCE:** Maria R. Kidwell;  
Laurie McKinney

**FIRE:** Helenita Grijalva; Moses Neal

**HUMAN SERVICES:** Cleo Guerrero; William Kimbrell;  
Mary Dianne Worrell

**KERN MEDICAL:** Norman L. Crews

**PROBATION:** Judy Agbayani

**PUBLIC HEALTH:** Virginia R. McQuiston

**PUBLIC WORKS:** Robin Carroll

**SHERIFF:** Angela R. Bozarth; John Coletti;  
Sucola E. Nichols

**SUPERIOR COURT:** Kathleen M. Smith

**WESTSIDE REC. PARK:** Donald Koenig

### **TAXES**

- Did you ever notice: When you put the 2 words
- 'The' and 'IRS' together it spells 'Theirs'.....

### **TRAVEL TIPS**

**Thursday, May 17, 2018: King Tut Exhibit,** Cost is \$100—includes roundtrip bus fare, entrance, IMAX Movie and lunch (Last Call!)

**Tuesday, May 15th, June 19th & July 17th:**

**Chukchansi Casino** Bus 8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. \$10.00  
Includes roundtrip bus & \$10.00 cash & \$5.00 food voucher

**Laughlin Bus Trip:** Nov. 9 - 12, 2018 - \$165 per person based on double occupancy

**America's Musical Heritage – 12 Day Bus Tour:**

**May 3—14, 2019 -** \$3390 per person based on double occupancy. Nashville, Memphis, Greenwood, Natchez, Lafayette & New Orleans

**Call today for Last Minute Alaska Cruise Pricing!**

Single travelers who don't want to pay the single traveler supplement and are looking for a travel partner, contact Julie at The Cruise Port.

Call **Julie** at **The Cruise Port**, (661 324-6910) with any questions or to make reservations for your travel plans.

## THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES



### Walter E. Stewart

By M. L. Bennett, Editor

After more than seventeen years of writing historical and entertaining articles for the TREND, Walter is retiring. We cannot thank him enough for all the information he provided over the years. Putting his articles together required hours of research, knowledge and talent, including his own artwork.

Before we let Walter go, we would like to pay tribute to him by giving his many readers a look at the long and fulfilling life of one special retiree:

Walter was born in Bakersfield over 91 years ago. He and his wife, Betty, have been married over 64 years and have a son, Marc, a daughter, Carol, 5 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren.

He served in the Navy for 2 years (beginning at age 17) during World War II, was stationed in Guam and Pearl Harbor, worked on the U.S.S. Rendova and the U.S.S. Biloxi and was about 55 miles south of Tinian Island when the B-29, Enola Gay, took off and dropped the nuclear bomb on Hiroshima.

Always interested in history, Walter became a member of The Ancient Order of E Clampus Vitus in the 1960s and in the 1990s he became a Certified Graphoanalyst, which allowed him to analyze handwriting. He is also a member of VFW Chapter 10859.

Walter obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Art Education from the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland after which he worked as a teacher for one year, decided it wasn't his life's work and ended up working for Standard Oil in Kings County. Not happy in the oil fields, Walter finally came to Kern County (our good fortune).

His 30 year career with Kern County started off as an extra-help janitor (with a college education) in the General Services Department and worked his way up to Property Coordinator for the whole County. While working in General Services he was given the responsibility of overseeing the closing of the tuberculosis sanitarium near Keene. From General Services, he went to work in the Public Works office and retired as an Architectural Engineer and Drafting Technologist.

He became a member of REOKC when he retired in 1992, served on the REOKC Board of Directors for several years, began writing his "History" column for the TREND in 2005 and led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance at every luncheon/meeting until just recently when failing health prevented him from continuing.

I'm sure most of us consider our lives enriched having been allowed to know and associate with this kind, caring and giving man. We love you Walter!

### Change of Address Form

If your address has changed, in order to receive the TREND newsletter and other important notices from REOKC, you must complete this form and send it to REOKC, PO Box 2592, Bakersfield, CA 93303:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

(*print*)

NEW Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

OLD Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### REOKC USEFUL CONTACTS

#### **KCERA Administration 661-381-7700**

**[www.KCERA.org](http://www.KCERA.org)**

- Retirement Check
- Withholding Forms
- Beneficiary Change
- Address Change (& REOKC) \*
- Retirement Board Meetings

#### **Retiree Health Benefits 661-868-3182**

- County – Health Insurance Div.

#### **REOKC Endorsed Insurance and Other Supplemental Benefits**

- Pacific Group Agencies, Inc.  
1-800-817-8838  
1-800-511-9065

#### **REOKC Other Related Services**

- **TREND Editor**
- **Membership**
- **Address/Email Change \***
- **Scholarship Program**

Mary Lou Bennett 661-871-5270

[mlbennett36@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mlbennett36@sbcglobal.net)

#### • **Luncheon Reservations**

Brenda Preston 661-204-4386

#### • **Sunshine (Cards of Expression)**

Josie De La Torre 661-348-4222

#### **KCERA Board Retiree Member**

- Phil Franey –  
franeyp@bak.rr.com
- Alternate—John Mattly  
jmattly@bak.rr.com

#### **Kern County District Attorney's Office**

- **Elder Abuse:** 661 868-2400



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

- Robert Banks—Building Inspection
- Richard Bramlette—Parks & Recreation
- John Burum—Assessor
- Ramona Campbell—Animal Control
- Alfred Castro—General Services
- Freida Christian—Human Services
- Carroll Clendenen—Sheriff
- William Copeland—General Services
- Janice Eanes—Kern Medical
- Cosmas N. George—Health Dept.
- Ramona Goodman—Fire
- Daniel Grabski—Mental Health Services
- Florence Hays—Human Services
- John D. Lane—Sheriff
- Derinda Lloyd—Mental Health Services
- Fred Lopez—Sheriff
- Vicki Lueth—Mental Health Services
- Charlene Mathis—Community & Econ. Dev.
- Charles Moore—Sheriff
- Muriel Mowery—Kern Medical
- J. W. Nichols—Sheriff
- Michael Oscars—Fire
- Edith Scott—Public Health
- Arnold Smith—Sheriff
- Ernest Somers—Fire
- Josephine M. Sontag—Parks & Recreation
- Phyllis Waldo—Human Services
- Ilona Weishaar—Mental Health Services
- George D. Welch—Fire
- Caroline Winslow—Veterans’ Service

*“A Life well-lived leaves behind  
a beautiful bouquet of memories.”*

*Author unknown*

**SUNSHINE COMMITTEE NOTICE**

If you know of any of our members who could use a get-well or sympathy card, please contact  
**JOSIE DE LA TORRE** at (661) 348-4222  
Thank you!

**Retired Employees of Kern County  
Annual Health Fair**

**When: July 10, 2018**

**Where: Hodel’s—Carriage Room**

Every year, REOKC and our health benefits consultant, Eric Barthel, strive to deliver value by providing information and services that address the healthcare needs of our unique population.

The healthcare issues we present at our health fairs are based on both perceived community needs as well as emerging trends in the marketplace with a view of finding ways to enrich the health of REOKC members.

This doesn’t mean, however, that we’re abandoning the programs many of our members value, such as:

- Free health screenings
- Healthy snacks
- A pharmacist to answer your questions about prescription drugs
- Pacific Group Agencies Insurance Services
- Representatives from the County’s health plans

In addition to these services, we are including representatives from the County’s Aging and Adult Services department. They will be attending to inform REOKC members about the vast array of services the County offers local seniors. We know that some personal needs can’t always be met by your doctor or family members. The Aging and Adult Services department can be a resource for things like accessing long term care and transportation for other social programs.

Additionally, we’d like to introduce REOKC members to local healthcare providers that offer services for the treatment of anxiety, depression and other conditions that, if untreated or undiagnosed, can adversely impact overall health.

**Make plans now to attend on July 10, 2018!**

**Reminder:** The surviving spouse of a retired Kern County Employee is eligible for REOKC membership. Just complete the Payroll Deduction Form on Page 4 and mail to:

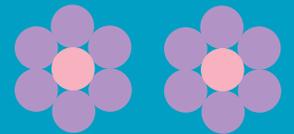
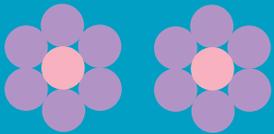
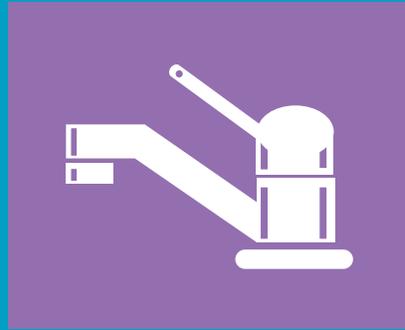
**REOKC, PO Box 2592, Bakersfield, CA 93303**

**NOTICE:** All views and opinions expressed in the TREND are solely the representation of each writer. REOKC’s only intention is to fairly inform our membership. The information presented in the TREND is believed to be from reliable sources. REOKC does not sell or disclose information about our members to third parties.



KERN FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

# Invest in Your Nest



**Borrow up to 133% of your home's value for improvements. Apply for a Home Equity Loan today!**

- Landscaping
- Updated kitchen and bath
- Solar energy
- Pool and patio



661.327.9461 • [www.kernfcu.org](http://www.kernfcu.org)

Kern Federal Credit Union is an equal housing lender. Federally insured by NCUA.

**KERN**  
Federal Credit Union

**Retired Employees of Kern County  
P.O. Box 2592  
Bakersfield, CA 93303**

**PRSRT-STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
BAKERSFIELD, CA  
PERMIT NO. 349**

**May & June 2018  
Time Dated Material**

**Official Newsletter of  
The Retired Employees of Kern County Inc.**

**May Luncheon Reservation**

**May 8, 2018**—11:30, **Hodel's, Kern Room, 5917 Knudsen Dr., Bakersfield.** 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 **REOKC, PO Box 40801, Bakersfield, CA 93384-0801**. Deadline for reservations is the Wednesday prior to the luncheon (05/02/18). Phone reservations are not accepted. You may cancel your reservations by calling Brenda Preston at (661) 204-4386 or Mary Thorp at (661) 378-2103 prior to the deadline. Cancellations after the deadline cannot be refunded.

Member's name(\$5.00)\_\_\_\_\_ Spouse(\$5.00)\_\_\_\_\_  
Member's Phone No. (required) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Guest (\$8.00)\_\_\_\_\_ Total tickets\_\_\_\_\_ Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**June Luncheon Reservation**

**June 12, 2018**—11:30, **Hodel's, Kern Room, 5917 Knudsen Dr., Bakersfield.** 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 **REOKC, PO Box 40801, Bakersfield, CA 93384-0801**. Deadline for reservations is the Wednesday prior to the luncheon (06/06/18). Phone reservations are not accepted. You may cancel your reservations by calling Brenda Preston at (661) 204-4386 or Mary Thorp at (661) 378-2103 prior to the deadline. Cancellations after the deadline cannot be refunded.

Member's name (\$5.00)\_\_\_\_\_ Spouse (\$5.00)\_\_\_\_\_  
Member's Phone No. (required)\_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Guest (\$8.00)\_\_\_\_\_ Total tickets\_\_\_\_\_ Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_