



T R E N D

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

Volume MMVIII-VI

November—December 2008

www.reokc.org

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

2008 will soon be history. One of the projects this year that we can look back on with pride, is the CRCEA (California Retired County Employees Association) Conference last Spring. Hosting the conference was a lot of work but very rewarding; other county members from all over California touted it as one of the best they had ever attended.

Another accomplishment of which I am proud is the fact that our organization has continued to operate well within our budget, despite the economic and financial problems in our state and country which continue to be of great concern to us all.

Looking into the future, every fall, Kern County has open enrollment for retirees who wish to change their insurance plans. This year is no different; open enrollment will be from November 1st to December 31st. The Health Fair will be on November 5th starting at 10:00 a.m. in the lobby of the Administrative Center at 1115 Truxtun Ave., Bakersfield. I encourage those of you who are under 65 years of age and not eligible for Medicare to attend this year because Kern County is offering another plan, EPO (Exclusive Provider Organization), with much lower premiums than the POS (Point of Service) Plan whose premiums will probably remain the same as last year. Other plans for the “under 65” retirees appear to be increasing from 3.5% to 10.3%. Preliminary reports that I’ve received indicate very little, if

any, increases in premiums this year on insurance plans for Medicare eligible retirees; the only exceptions being the increase of over 26% on the Blue Cross—HMO (with Rx) plan and the increase of over 23% on Healthnet—POS plan. According to the Kern County Health Benefits Office (661 868-3182), packets, explaining changes and introducing new options, should be mailed to all retirees prior to the Health Fair. It is very important that we all stay as informed as possible about our benefits, so, please get involved; it’s your HEALTH and your MONEY!

November is a very important month this year. The General Election will be held on November 4th and the elections for our Board members will be held during our November luncheon/General Meeting on the 11th. The official slate of nominees, to fill the one vacant Director’s position, was presented to the members at the October meeting. Voting is the only way we can select our leaders so be sure to get informed and get out and vote!

The speaker for November will be Greg Sanders from CALM and for our December Christmas luncheon our entertainment will be the Image Ballet Co. Dancers. Remember, the Christmas luncheon this year will be held at the Norris Road Veterans’ Hall, **NOT** at the Kern County Fair Grounds.

And finally, I would like to extend my many thanks to the members of our Board who keep the organization running smoothly, and to all the Helping Hands and volunteers for their contribution in preserving and promoting the general welfare of our members. I also want to thank all of you, our over 3,900 members of REOKC, for your interest and support. Due to your encouragement, I have decided to continue as your President for one final year. Hoping to see you at our luncheons and wishing all of you a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

Jeanne



YOUR RETIREMENT BOARD

by Norman R. Briggs

Dear Members of REOKC –

How fortunate we are to have been privy to a defined benefit program for our retirement years. These are heavy economic times for our country and the world. I feel we, our country, are in uncharted waters and no one really knows what will cure our financial woes. Fortunately our retirement system is well positioned to ride out the storm.

At the last Retirement Board meeting Phil Franey, Retiree Trustee, requested KCERA’s Executive Director to provide REOKC’s members an update on the status of their retirement accounts. The following was provided to us:

KCERA Investment Update

“Some KCERA members have expressed concern about the safety of their retirement benefits. Be assured that as a “defined benefit” plan, KCERA will continue to provide its members with their *full* retirement benefits for life, regardless of volatility in the stock market and economic downturns. Your pension is vested—you have a legal right to receive the benefit that you have earned. The commitment of KCERA and your employer to pay these benefits—known as the “pension promise”—offers great security to our members.

The KCERA pension fund can withstand the current financial turmoil. With the assistance of its investment consultant, Wilshire Associates, Inc., the Board of Retirement has broadly invested (diversified) the fund’s assets to mitigate risks associated with market volatility.

By adhering strictly to its investment policy and focusing on its long-term mission to provide KCERA members with their promised benefits, you can rest assured that the fund will weather the current financial crisis.

Look for an investment update in the January 2009 edition of *The Retirement Chronicles*.”

Both Phil and I hope this will allay your concerns regarding your pension benefits. It is certainly a time to be prudent and we need to stay the course. With the holidays quickly approaching we wish all of you the best and a happy holiday season.

Norman R. Briggs

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEETINGS/LUNCHEONS PARKING:

Due to limited parking at the Norris Road Veteran’s Hall, our President, Jeanne Berkshire, contacted one of the Elders at St. Mark’s Church, two doors west of the Veteran’s Hall, and obtained permission for our members to use their parking lot on the days of our meetings/luncheons.

We are encouraging those who are able and don’t mind walking or perhaps enjoy a stroll before and after lunch to utilize St. Mark’s parking lot.

GUEST LUNCH TICKETS INCREASE

Beginning in January, 2009, the price for Guest lunch tickets will be increased from \$7.00 to \$8.00. At the present time, there will be no change in the price of lunch tickets for REOKC members and their spouses.

GOOD ADVICE?

The one thing that’s okay to swallow that won’t result in indigestion is your pride.

A good rule of thumb is to keep your mouth shut two times—1) when you’re swimming and 2) when you’re angry.

Sit down for a few minutes and be still. Now examine what’s in the center of your heart.

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 August 2008,
32 volunteers worked 98 hours assisting 821 visitors
at the County Administrative Building.

During the month of September 2008,
31 volunteers worked 95 hours assisting 892 visitors
at the County Administrative Building.

*Since 1992 our volunteers have assisted more than
265,000 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.

GOOFY WARNING LABELS

- A cardboard car sunshield that keeps sun off the dashboard warns: "Do not drive with sunshield in place."
- A household iron warns users: "Never iron clothes while they are being worn."
- A popular scooter for children warns: "This product moves when used."



Nov. 11	REOKC Board Meeting Norris Road Veteran's Hall	10:00 am
Nov. 11	REOKC General Meeting Lunch served Norris Road Veteran's Hall	11:30 am 12:00 noon
Nov. 19	KCERA-Board Meeting County Admin. Bldg.	8:30 am

Dec. 9	REOKC Christmas Luncheon Lunch served Norris Road Veteran's Hall Image Ballet Co. Dancers Installation of 2009 Officers	11:30 am 12:00 noon
Dec. 10	KCERA-Board Meeting County Admin. Bldg.	8:30 am

LUNCHEON MENU



November 11th, 2008

Individual Pot Roast
Mashed Potatoes—Vegetable Medley
Spinach Salad — Rolls
Pumpkin Pie
Iced Tea, Coffee, Water

December 9th, 2008

Turkey & Ham Dinner with
Stuffing and Cranberry Sauce
Yams—Mashed Potatoes and Gravy—Green Beans
Rolls—Cheesecake
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)



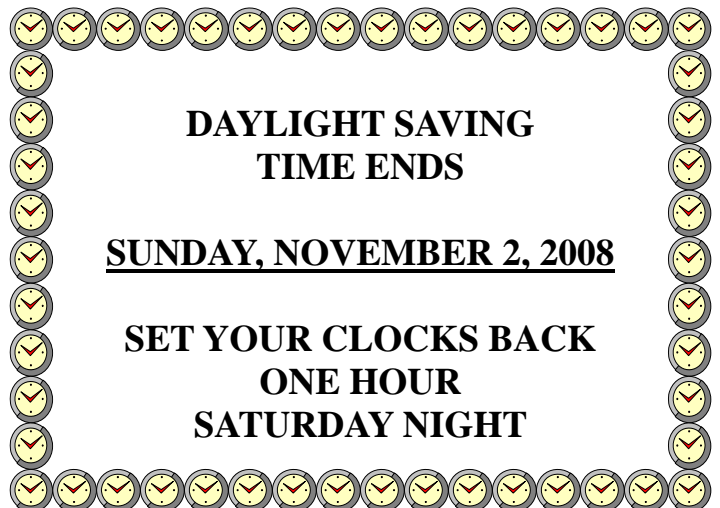
"WELCOME!"

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

Peter Algra—Assessor; Day Altair—Mental Health; Ramon Avena—Probation; Carol Baker-Willey—KC Board of Trade; Connie Bartlett—County Admin.; Lydia Bedonia—KMC; Glen Brewton—Fire; Diane Carothers—Mental Health; Clara Chaidez—Human Services; Karen Cutsforth—Construction Services; Ronald Durand—Employers' Training; Angela Dye—Treasurer-Tax Collector; Marie Ellwood—Human Services; Carlos Estrada - General Services; Evelyn Eterno—Human Services; Kenneth Frasca—Fire; Randall Griffin—Fire; Elizabeth Hawley—Mental Health; Myrna Hazzard—Human Services; Gary Hinds—Assessor; Paulanna Hodges—County Admin.; Mark Horn—Human Services; Judith Kavanaugh—Assessor; Diane Koditek—Mental Health; Linda Lancaster—Human Services; Raymond Lomas—KMC; Jane McGee—Child Support Services; Andrea Meza—Treasurer-Tax Collector; James Miller—Human Services; James Nikkel—Human Services; Esther Ruiz - Superior Court; Carolyn Rush—Health; Tommie Self—Human Services; Yolanda Sercena-KMC; Selma Sexton - Mental Health; Mary Simpson—Probation; Kathy Steward—Health; Bryan Stovall—Parks & Recreation; Frances Thompson—Superior Court; Alma Toone—KMC; Denise Underhill—Sheriff

Beneficiaries:

Sherman Burkhead—Health; Patricia Gillick—Waste Mgmt.; Mary Wagher—Probation; Mary Wilms—Fire



**DAYLIGHT SAVING
TIME ENDS**

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2008

**SET YOUR CLOCKS BACK
ONE HOUR
SATURDAY NIGHT**

KERN COUNTY HISTORY



TIBURCIO VASQUEZ **BANDIDO** **EXTRAORDINARIO**

By Walter Stewart

Tiburcio Vasquez is a name that stands out among the desperados who pursued a life of crime in early Kern County. Vasquez's crimes read like who's who in 19th century criminal archives. Vasquez was not from Kern County, nevertheless many of his criminal escapades were perpetrated in Kern County.

A large outcropping of rocks appropriately known as "Robber's Roost" is visible south of Route 178 and west of Route 14 near Freeman Junction in the Mojave Desert. The rocks are on an elevated plateau overlooking the roads. Routes 178 and 14 were dusty trails in the 1800s. Vasquez and his gang of banditos frequently swooped down from Robber's Roost and robbed wealthy travelers and stagecoaches transporting bullion shipments. The recurring robberies were finally curtailed when Army troops from Fort Independence were dispatched to patrol the area.

One of Vasquez's lawless acts reads like a Hollywood movie script. In essence, he inadvertently emulated Robin Hood. Vasquez stopped at an isolated ranch near San Gabriel to visit a friend. He was greeted by his friend's tearful widow who told him her husband was deceased and she was losing her ranch due to foreclosure. Vasquez gave her the full amount of money she needed. He then told the widow to write a letter to the mortgage holder. He instructed her to state she had the \$1400 (which was a large sum of money in the 1800s). The letter enjoined the mortgage holder to be at the ranch on so-and-so date at so-and-so hour to collect the money. The mortgage holder unsuspectingly followed the letter's instructions. The widow gave the mortgage holder the money. The ranch ownership deed was handed over to the widow. Vasquez and his gang of cutthroats were lying in ambush down the dusty trail. They waylaid the mortgage holder and took the money. The mortgage holder escaped with his life by not resisting Vasquez. Even Vasquez's good deed was fraught with criminal intent. Vasquez retrieved his money and the widow had the deed to her ranch.

Vasquez's luck finally ran out when he was eventually captured in San Jose and hanged March 19, 1875.

"HELPING HANDS" PROFILES



LINDA PARKER is the other half of the Decorating Team, along with June Ennis who was featured in our last newsletter. Together, they prepare the dining tables for our luncheons and provide the decorations which make for a more festive atmosphere.

Linda was born and raised on a farm close to Famoso which is just north of Bakersfield, off Highways 99 and 46; growing up between one older and one younger brother. She attended school in McFarland, graduating from McFarland High School. She also graduated from B.C. (Bakersfield College) and worked part time at a fabric store as a salesperson. Her work experience also includes being a "soda jerk" at a drug store in McFarland.

The first job she had with Kern County was at KMC in the Medical Records Department. From there she went to the Library, then to the office of the D.A., Criminal Division. She then left the County and worked about a year running an office for a company working for the oil fields. When they closed their office, she finally went back to the County, working for KMC Billing and retiring from Child Support as a Family Support Officer in 2005 after completing a total of 34 years with Kern County. Shortly after retiring, Linda joined REOKC and within a year or so volunteered as a Helping Hand for the decorating team.

Linda's hobbies include quilting and travel. She visited England this year and had a wonderful time. Her next trip, which will be to the New England area, is being planned and we certainly wish her "Happy Trails" and many exciting trips and travels in her future.

Thank you, Linda, for your help in making our luncheons more enjoyable every month!



HEALTHY NOTES

by Audrey Cochran, RNCS,CCCN

Even though I recommend avoiding medicines if at all possible, I got into trouble by the lure of, "This will make you feel better." It all began when I got the economy size bottle of Glucosamine Sulfate with MSM at CostCo. The combination, when taken for about 3 months, gives your body the necessary ingredients to build up the linings on your joints so they aren't so painful. But 1500 mg/tablet? That's more than my 100 pound body needs, so I decided to cut the tablets in half. I take my vitamins and food supplements with meals to make it easier for my body to process them, and swallow them together, the chewed up food helping them slide down my throat. But the half tablet got stuck in the place where my tonsils used to be. I tried coughing it up, then tried swallowing it with a piece of bread, but couldn't get over the feeling it was still lodged in my throat. So the next day I went to my doctor and he said he couldn't see anything, and referred me to an ear-nose-and-throat specialist. That doctor put a tiny fiberoptic wire through my nose and looked. He said the back of my throat was inflamed but nothing was stuck there. "Maybe that feeling is from reflux (backing up of partially digested food) from your stomach. I'll give you a prescription for Prilosec (omeprazole)."

I thanked him, filled my prescription, went home, and several days later went for my barium swallow, which showed NO reflux. That was a good thing because 5 days after starting the omeprazole, my lips were tingling and cracks developed at the corners of my lips. The next day I noticed sores inside my mouth. Suspecting my medication, I did some research on Internet, found http://www.fda.gov/MedWatch/SAFETY/2006/Jan_PI/Prilosec_PI.pdf and concluded these symptoms were caused by the omeprazole and immediately stopped taking it. As I write this, 2 weeks later, my lips no longer tingle, but I still have the cracks at the corners of my lips and the sores inside my mouth. I will put this medicine on my list of allergies. From what I've read, had I continued taking it I could have died from toxic epidermal necrolysis or Stevens-Johnson syndrome, as a friend of mine did.

But while getting the barium swallow, the technician asked me to lie down and swallow which meant I had to arch my back, which overstretched my psoas muscle for which I am now being treated by my chiropractor and my massage therapist. In the meantime I filled a report at <https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/medwatch/medwatch-online.htm> and I won't be so quick to run to the doctor next time.

This episode demonstrates also the importance of keeping a diary for 2 weeks to record your response to any new prescription any doctor gives you. A doctor only has a general idea of how a medicine will help you. He has little knowledge about your genetic makeup and how it will affect the medicine he has suggested. Only you can determine that, by being a careful observer and reporting the results to him. But few doctors bother reporting it to *medwatch* until a study is published reporting side effects, leading experts to suspect side effects are woefully under reported. So please file a report yourself, like I did.



WE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER OUR DECEASED REOKC MEMBERS:

M'Lou Abbott—Aging & Adult Services
Ozella Bell—Human Services
Peggy Bess—General Services
Charlotte Burkhead—Health
Bernard Chaidez—Roads
Lorraine Corbitt—KMC
Alberta Gibe—Human Services
Dorothy Harris—KMC
Doris Holman—Health
Bobbie Madden—KMC
Willfred Martin—Fire
John McNally—District Attorney
Shirley Seaman—Human Services
Gloria Speck—Fire
Barbara Taylor—Sheriff
Michael Thompson—KMC
Dorothy Turner—KMC
Muriel Walsh—Probation
Kenneth Wilms—Fire

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Kern Federal Credit Union, a trusted neighbor.

When you become a member of Kern FCU, you'll enjoy a complete range of financial services and products, plus the personalized attention and service our Credit Union members have enjoyed for over 59 years.

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November/December 2008
Time Dated Material

Official Newsletter of
The Retired Employees of Kern County Inc.

November Luncheon Reservation

November 11, 2008 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 (11/05/08). 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 (\$7.00) _____ Total tickets _____ Amount enclosed \$ _____

December (Christmas) Luncheon Reservation

December 9, 2008 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 (12/03/2008). 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 (\$10.00) _____ Spouse(\$10.00) _____

(Members and Spouses Only—No Guests) Total tickets _____ Amount enclosed \$ _____