



# T R E N D

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

Volume MMXII-V

September & October 2012

www.reokc.org

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## President's Message Phil Franey

*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.*

At this same time last year, I stated that the global financial markets were experiencing a significant downside correction with the United States receiving a first time downgrade by Standard & Poor's from AAA to AA+ on note and bond ratings. Last summer we also read about and heard our acrimonious politicians doing nothing in offering responsible leadership at the federal and state level - leaving horrendous results. At the same time, seniors seemed to be a primary target of scam artists according to Money magazine. Well, not much has changed in a year. Except this fall, we are looking at a presidential election along with our usual health benefit open enrollments. On a more pleasant note, our July luncheon was a great success in conjunction with our second annual health fair. We also will be presenting our slate for next year's REOKC Board this fall.

Much has been written about the current global market. At this time there seems to be less uncertainty of the European Markets with more comfort for sound global corporations, not including the weaker financial sector. The domestic economy is experiencing a slow recovery with no resolution of deficit issues for the federal government. With the usual no requirement for a balanced budget and billions of dollars off budget, the American public should really worry about the deficit caused by the spending of many presidential administrations over the past few decades. We should continue to experience market uncertainty and a lack of confidence because of divisive and uncompromising politics. These are com-

ments by many market analysts who also point to needed economic improvement in local government, real estate and employment for growth and stability. Well, not much has changed since last year.

To prolong our angst more and closer to home, the reckless politics of Sacramento continue to cause much concern. With a fragile budget, based on accounting gimmicks and funding dependant on a questionable November ballot initiative (\$8 billion something), and the excessive burden in the future funding of more than \$100 billion (quite possibly \$100's of billions) for the San Joaquin River water tunnels and high speed rail project have taken California taxpayers to the abyss of financial disaster. What will this do to local government (eviscerated by the state for decades), real estate, and employment in the future? Congress also plays the game of endless funds - quite well. Talk about a runaway train, how about free fall. Not only for our generation, but I really fear for our children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and future generations. This is the result of governance catering to special interests with little regard for the average citizen. What a bummer!

Seniors are still prime targets of con artists and other criminal predators. One of the more common risks is identity theft by the use of phishing. Phishing is the use of fake emails that link you to fraudulent websites and ask you for personal data. Some of the websites look close to the real ones except for a few details. Another area of risk may be the transferring of financial and other personal data using Wi-Fi (wireless fidelity - use of wireless communication). Take extreme care with all your financial affairs and deal with people and devices you truly know and trust. When in doubt, do not engage strangers or those you do not know well with your personal and financial matters. Obviously, avoid the use of less secure electronic devices and networks.

Before our next issue of the TREND, information on health benefits will be sent to all retirees by the Kern County Administrative Office, Health Benefits Division. Please read the information carefully and if you have any questions use the contacts that are indicated on the mailed publication. During our October luncheon we expect to have a representative of the Health Benefits Division present current health information. You may access more health information at the Health Benefits Division website: [www.KernCountyHealthBenefits.com](http://www.KernCountyHealthBenefits.com).

(President's Message continued on page 2)



## YOUR RETIREMENT BOARD

by **Norman Briggs**

**H**ello! Welcome to summer in Bakersfield. I believe it only reached 101° plus or minus 4° today, but who's checking after we reach the triple digit arena?

As you will recall the Board of Retirement is only meeting once a month for the next year on a trial basis. We covered a lot of ground today at the August meeting which lasted a little over three hours. I missed you folks and I continue to urge you to attend some of these meetings. It's your retirement system and you shouldn't leave the management of it up to just Mr. Franey, your president, and myself, your humble representative. The agendas are posted a week in advance on KCERA's website, [www.kcera.org](http://www.kcera.org). September 12th's meeting will be an educational oriented affair and you might find it of interest. Unfortunately I will be out of state on that day.

An issue of which you should be aware, regards the possible effects any policy changes may have on the SRBR reserve funding. Today (8/8/2012) your Board had a discussion on the annual review of the Interest Crediting Policy. The project to review these policies gives one the opportunity to identify any policy issues that are appropriate for the Board of Retirement to consider. An example given by our actuary at this Board meeting involved some "excess earnings" policies. Changes in this area could directly affect SRBR funding since KCERA is an Article 5.5 SRBR system. This is a complex issue and it's best to hear the details first hand so keep it in mind to review the Board's agendas before each meeting.

Your Board also has approved the hiring of Clifton/Larson/Allen LLP to provide KCERA audit services for the fiscal year 2011-2012. This annual independent audit of KCERA's operations is a statutory requirement and is due at the end of the year.

Other issues covered in the last Board meeting were:

1. Presentation by our new Hedge Fund consultant, Albourne Partners. We are moving from a fund to funds hedge fund modality to making direct allocations to hedge funds. Currently KCERA's investment is split between two fund to funds (Blackstone and K2 Advisors). As of June 30th 2012 we had close to \$153 million invested in hedge funds. These investments will be redeemed over the next six months and transitioned into the new modality. With this change it is projected that we will save an estimated \$2+ million in fees alone and anticipate better returns on our investments.
2. Six disability applications were reviewed.

3. A report received from our Proxy vote company, Glass Lewis.
4. Our investment consultant, Wurt's Associates, reviewed our current asset allocations.
5. Segal Company provided a new draft Employer Termination Policy for Agencies (Employers) who no longer wish to participate in the KCERA system. The Board approved their first alternative approach for liabilities with no reassessments.

There was more but my editor holds me to two columns. You can see that you miss a lot by not coming to our Board meetings! Be well and stay cool. By the time you read this, we will be headed for our Indian Summer time.

**Norman**

### President's Message continued from page 1

Retiree health insurance is administered by the County Administrative Office - Health Benefits Division, **not the Kern County Employees Retirement Association (KCERA)**. Your REOKC Board also is scheduling enrollment for the Pacific Group Agencies, Inc. (PGAI) Supplemental Benefits Program. **This is a separate program from that of the County's health insurance benefit program.** The PGAI Supplemental Benefits Program is endorsed by REOKC to offer additional benefits, such as legal services and other insurances to include: dental insurance, vision, pet, and accident/travel. **The Supplemental Benefits Program is administered by the Pacific Group Agencies, Inc., not KCERA.** Current enrollment in the PGAI various programs is more than 960 REOKC retirees and beneficiaries.

We hope everyone that attended the July BBQ luncheon enjoyed the food and health fair. The health fair participants were provided with health information and various health screenings from Kaiser, Liberty Dental, Pacific Group Agencies, San Joaquin Hospital/Adventist Health, VSP (vision), Optimal Hospice, and Sidles Duncan & Assoc. We thank all the participants and mostly the health service providers for their time and valuable services.

Other business this Fall will be the REOKC Board Election according to our bylaws. During our August luncheon your proposed slate for 2012 Board of Directors was presented as follows:

- Phil Franey - President
- Nancy Warnick - 1st Vice President
- Teresa M. Vasquez - 2nd Vice President
- Ginger Mello - Secretary
- Mary Lou Bennett - Treasurer
- Josie De La Torre - Director
- Cheryl Anderson - Director
- Tony Rizos - Director
- Alan Annis - Director
- Sally A. Ruiz - Director
- Jeanne Berkshire - Past President

**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).

**Host/Hostess Project**

During the month of June 2012, 28 volunteers worked 86 hours assisting 781 visitors at the County Administrative Building.

During the month of July 2012, 33 volunteers worked 101 hours assisting 873 visitors at the County Administrative Building.

*Since 1992 our volunteers have worked over 24,489 hours assisting more than 306,000 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.

**President's Message** concluded from page 2

As an ongoing reminder to save publishing and mailing costs, all of our 4,700 plus members are encouraged to request placement on REOKC's email list by contacting Mary Lou Bennett at [mlbennett36@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mlbennett36@sbcglobal.net) to receive timely notice concerning important retirement matters. You may also access past TREND issues and other important retiree information at [reokc.org](http://reokc.org).

Don't forget our next luncheon will be on September 11 with serving by table number beginning at 11:30 A.M. The general meeting will begin at 12:00 Noon.

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*"I despise people who go to the gutter on either the right or the left and hurl rocks at those in the center."*

**Dwight D. Eisenhower**



- Sept. 11 REOKC Board Meeting 10:00 am  
Norris Road Veteran's Hall
- Sept. 11 REOKC Lunch 11:30 am—noon  
General Meeting 12:00 noon  
Norris Road Veteran's Hall
- Sept. 12 KCERA—Investment Committee 7:30 am  
Investment/Regular Board Meeting 8:30 am  
KCERA Office, 11125 River Run Blvd., Bakersfield
- \*\*\*\*\*
- Oct. 9 REOKC Board Meeting 10:00 am  
Norris Road Veteran's Hall
- Oct. 9 REOKC Lunch 11:30 am—noon  
General Meeting 12:00 noon  
Norris Road Veteran's Hall
- Oct. 10 KCERA—Investment Committee 7:30 am  
Investment/Regular Board Meeting 8:30 am  
KCERA Office, 11125 River Run Blvd., Bakersfield

**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!**

**LUNCHEON MENUS**  
**September 11th, 2012**



- Spaghetti with Meat Sauce
- Garlic Bread—Baby Carrots
- Cranberry Salad—Santa Maria Salad
- Chocolate Cake
- Iced Tea, Coffee, Water



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**October 9th, 2012**

- Chicken Fettuccini
- Rice Pilaf—Buttered Corn
- Creamy Broccoli Salad
- Wheat Rolls—Peach Cobbler
- Iced Tea, Coffee, Water



## **PAYROLL DEDUCTION FORM**

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

- 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, Inc. 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Detach form and send to:*

KCERA / 11125 River Run Blvd. / Bakersfield / 93311

## **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**

**ASSESSOR:** Derrilyn Bayha

**CALIF. CHILDREN SERVICES:** Cheryl Collins;  
Hope Trancoso

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY:** Lynn Strom

**FIRE:** Pauline Baker; Ethel Turner

**HUMAN SERVICES:** Rita Pizana; Norma Rios

**KERN MEDICAL CENTER:** Johnnie Childs; Sonia De  
Luna; Maria Ramirez; Donald White

**LIBRARY:** Susan Spear

**MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES:** Merlin McClung;  
William Wilson

**PUBLIC DEFENDER:** Barbara Gardiner; Michael Webb

**SHERIFF:** Michael Barnes; Lorah Carroll; Melissa  
Chase; Connie Croley; Michael Dunham; John Lee; Su-  
san Schaeffer-Cowan

**WASTE MANAGEMENT ENTERPRISE:** Joshua De-  
vore

**WEST SIDE MOSQUITO:** Don Black

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

Robert Bayha—Assessor  
Kathryn Black—Kern Medical Center  
Barry Davis—Human Services  
Thelma Farmer—Mental Health Services  
Robert Gardiner—Public Defender  
Eleanor Hample—Museum  
Brenda Herron—Parks & Recreation  
Fredrick James—Probation  
Frank Johnson—Risk Management  
Mildred Jones—Kern Medical Center  
Billie Laughlin—Superior Court  
Elinor MacDonald—Health  
Viola Mowers—Sheriff  
Judith O’Kane—Sheriff  
Millard Phillips—Sheriff  
Vernal Pigg—Fire  
Jimmie Powers—Probation  
Windel Prater—Parks & Recreation  
Jack Sampson—Agriculture & Measurement  
Doris Spicer—General Services  
Louis Taylor—Construction Services  
James Turner—General Services Division  
Frances Zietlow—Kern Medical Center

## KERN COUNTY HISTORY



### MAGGIE'S LAUNDRY

By **WALTER E. STEWART**

Here is a trivial piece of Kern County history worthy of a chuckle:

Around the turn of the century, Delano promoter(s) advertised and sold 25 foot wide lots for \$25 per lot. Delano's first jail was an insignificant little twelve foot square wooden building on the edge of one of the lots. The property seller(s) had to be cognizant of the fact a little jail was on the property they were selling. What is on land when sold goes with the land unless otherwise specified before sale. The sheriff was apparently not informed of the transaction. There is an unknown historical enigma as to why and how the transaction transpired.

An Irish lady from the east, whose name is historically known only as Maggie, bought a lot and came west to claim her investment. To her surprise the Delano jail sat on the edge of her lot. She procured the service of a surveyor to verify Lot 3, Block 51 was indeed her property. Being an enterprising lady, needing to generate income, she converted the little jail into a laundry.

Arrests fell off while Maggie had possession of the jail, there being no place to lockup prisoners. The building had only one door on the west side that Maggie contributed to increased interior summer afternoon heat. She engaged a mule skinner to turn the building around. Deputy Orr got word of the planned turnaround. He hoped and correctly calculated the building would be dislocated off Maggie's property during turnaround. He hurriedly procured an injunction, arguably giving him authority to take possession of the jail (or should I say laundry?) while it was not on Maggie's property. Apparently nobody challenged the validity of his injunction. The scheming deputy cunningly waited until the naïve mule skinner dragged the building off Maggie's property then charged him with stealing the jail.

Were Maggie and the mule skinner victims of larceny? Deputy Orr told the gullible mule skinner he would let him off-the-hook if he would tow the building away. The mule skinner, thinking he escaped arrest, gleefully accepted a \$10 towing fee. Dust boiled while mules dragged the building to railroad property near the water tower.

The building was reinstated as a jail. It later served as a tool shed. It finally became a historical relic in Delano's pioneer village. What should a sign attached to the building say.....Delano's first jail or Maggie's laundry?

## 2012 SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED!

Our first year for providing scholarships to relatives of our REOKC members was very fruitful. The Scholarship Committee found it difficult deciding which two of the six applicants would be awarded the scholarships. Our congratulations go to the two winners: Shane Spencer and Alexis Dodenhoff who each received their \$750.00 scholarship awards at our August 14th Luncheon/Meeting.



Shane Spencer (third from left) is pictured with his father, Glenn Spencer; mother, Pamela Spencer; grandmother, Halta Spencer. Shane's father and grandmother are both REOKC members. Shane graduated Bakersfield Christian High School and will be attending Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, Texas, majoring in Business Administration/Accounting. Shane has played the trumpet in the California All-State Honor Band and the Kern County Honor Jazz Band for three years. He also participated in high school athletics and volunteered at his church.



Alexis Dodenhoff (third from left) is shown with her family: mother, Stephanie Dodenhoff; grandmother, Janoula Dodenhoff, member of REOKC; father, Brad Dodenhoff. Alexis graduated Garces Memorial High School and will be attending San Diego State University, majoring in Business Administration. In addition to volunteering in the community while in high school, she was active in volleyball and cheerleading, was Editor of the school newspaper and held the position of Campus Minister.

We are very proud of these young students and wish them well in their endeavors to obtain their goals!

## MEET YOUR REOKC BOARD MEMBERS



**Ginger Mello**

Most of our members who attend our luncheons/meetings on a regular basis know and appreciate Ginger Mello, the Secretary of REOKC. In addition to her secretarial duties, she is also the CRCEA (California Retired County Employees Association) Delegate.

Ginger was born in Bakersfield at Mercy Hospital and even though she grew up mainly in Bakersfield, part of her youth was spent in Idaho, Utah and Keene, California where her parents worked for the TB Hospital. She graduated Tehachapi High School and attended Bakersfield Junior College. She worked a few years for Kern County General Services until she married Charles Mello and started a family. Charles Mello worked for Kern County at the TB Hospital in Keene and Kern General Hospital (which is now Kern Medical Center). Marrying Charles gave Ginger a stepdaughter, Kimberley and together, she and Charles have two children, Tony and Kathy. They have two granddaughters and two grandsons.

Charles had worked for the County about 14 years when he decided to work for the State of California Prison System for the next 18 years, during which time, Ginger and her family lived in Atascadero, Salinas, Tehachapi and Vacaville. During this period, Ginger kept busy with Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, PTA and teaching catechism at their local Catholic Church.

Charles retired in 1992 and they returned to Bakersfield where Charles became a member of REOKC and they started attending the meetings. Late in 2000, Ginger was asked to be the REOKC Secretary. Since she was not a Kern County retiree or beneficiary, in order for her to serve on the REOKC Board, she was made an Honorary Member and began her long career as Secretary in 2001; so far she's worked with five different Presidents. In 2007 Ginger became the CRCEA Alternate Delegate and moved up to Delegate in 2011 when David Merritt vacated the position.

In addition to her all her duties for REOKC, for the last thirteen years, she's served and continues to serve as a public member on the Kern County Local Agency Formation Commission; she is Treasurer for RPEA (Retired Public Employees Association) and has held that position for seven years. She and Charles spend their "spare" time watching their grandchildren, ranging in school from elementary to junior college, participate in sports, dancing and cheerleading.

Ginger will soon complete her twelfth year as Secretary of REOKC and we are all very thankful to have such a dedicated and energetic person on our team. Thanks, Ginger, for all you do!

### SMILES

Lady: "If I took out a million dollars of life insurance on my husband and he died the next day, what would I get?"

Attorney: "Life."

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After examining the contents of the employees' suggestion box, the boss complained, "I wish they'd be more specific. What kind of kite? What lake?"

\*\*\*\*\*

My golf game is improving. Yesterday I hit the ball in one.

### UPCOMING PROGRAMS

#### September 11, 2012:

Sandy Morris from BPD will be speaking on "Savvy Seniors" and Christmas for Seniors.

#### October 9, 2012:

Kathy Vochoska with Donate Life California, speaking on organ and tissue donation.

Susan Rooney with Kern County Administrative Office, Health Benefits Division will provide current health information for this year's Open Enrollment.

**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. Opinions of the writers are not necessarily the opinions of the REOKC Board. REOKC does not sell or disclose information about our members to third parties.**



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**September & October 2012  
Time Dated Material**

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

**September Luncheon Reservation**

**September 11th, 2012** -11:30 to noon, 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 **REOKC, PO Box 40801, Bakersfield, CA 93384-0801.** Deadline for reservations is the Wednesday prior to the luncheon (09/05/12). Phone reservations are not accepted. You may cancel your reservations by calling Brenda Preston at (661) 835-0294 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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**October Luncheon Reservation**

**October 9th, 2012** -11:30 to noon, 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 **REOKC, PO Box 40801 Bakersfield, CA 93384-0801.** Deadline for reservations is the Wednesday prior to the luncheon (10/03/12). Phone reservations are not accepted. You may cancel your reservations by calling Brenda Preston at (661) 835-0294 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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_