



# T R E N D

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

Volume MMXXIV-III

May & June 2024

www.reokc.org

Robert Seibly, President

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



## President's Message

**ROBB  
SEIBLY**

*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.*

Usually my message contains current activities and hopefully useful information for our members. However, since we will all soon be celebrating Mother's Day (May 12) and Father's Day (June 16), I would like to share an essay, written by my daughter who served our country in the U.S. Air Force for 20 years and learned that disappointments sometimes worked out best for our families and future:

The year was: 2000

Name the band from the following lyrics:

"That every long lost dream led me to where you are,  
others who broke my heart, they were like northern stars"

It's easy to look at what went "our way" with gratitude but how often do we look back at the broken road, the "setbacks" and realize what we would not have if had we gotten what we thought we needed?

As a young Airman, desperate to leave my first assignment, Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho (no offense Gunfighter Nation). As I longed to live the Air Force sexiness of anywhere in Europe Command, I put in for unthinkable amounts of postal jobs, which to my great dismay at the time, I never got.

If I got what I wanted back then, I would not have met the Religious Affairs Superintendent at precisely the moment when I was eligible to retrain. He would not have helped me to shut off my Aircraft Maintenance orders to Korea and I wouldn't have retrained into the best job I've ever have, Religious Affairs.

If I had left Mountain Home when I thought I needed to, I wouldn't have dated then married the world's best husband. We wouldn't have gallivanted throughout Korea and Europe together as newly weds. We certainly would not have put down roots (7 years and counting) at our follow on of Shaw Air Force Base, SC. We wouldn't have been prepared for our two wonderful children.

The deployments, long hours, incredible pressures of Air Combat Command would not have made a way for a deep dependence on a support system (counselors, friends, family, church, neighbors, Oprah and friends, Mental Health, fitness, sleep behaviors, etc.) which grew my coping mechanisms and faith that when suffering comes, I am able to trust, if only for that one moment, that I can sustain despite what my thoughts, feelings or circumstance may say.

The character and depth built in challenges refine our gifts, making our contribute to the world of great value. We learn to live, to choose to behave, to the best that we can for that moment, as a leader worth following, a follower worth leading, a person who is respected because of our great humility.

That Direct Safety Violation, verbal counseling, disappointment of our spouse may not be the highlight of the day, month or year. No, it does not feel or look like a gift but as Pastor T. D. Jakes says "Pain always leaves a present." Casting aside the challenges as simply a bad day without recognizing what we gained from it the bigger violation than whatever we originally missed the mark on.

Choosing to repositioning our perspective and celebrating the broken road produces greater than we can ask, think or imagine for ourselves. It is the brokenness that leads to a grandest plan, the growth needed in order to travel our individually specific path towards fulfilling our unique and incredibly vital contribution and purpose for this life.

Answer: The band was Rascal Flatts



## 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 had an enjoyable St. Patrick’s Day and Easter. I also wish everyone a safe Memorial Day. Expect to see that 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. More changes have taken place with quite a bit of Board business as follows:

The Boardroom has been open for one year with public meetings in person. The public still has the option of listening to audio or access live audio and video of Board meetings in progress. Instructions to participate in either manner will be contained on the cover page of any agenda meeting available on the KCERA website.

KCERA hired a new Communications Manager, Jeremy Rowell, about this time last year. As mentioned last year, Jeremy has years of experience in the communications and broadcasting industry. He has been developing and implementing a comprehensive strategic KCERA Communications Plan, to include expanded educational and outreach activities for members, sponsors and stakeholders. This action continues the ongoing effort to maintain the growth of needed information to all KCERA members for the future. Recently, KCERA conducted a very successful summit conference with our stakeholders to enhance our outreach program to our sponsors.

During the March and April 2024 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: 2024-2025 Chief Executive Officer Performance Evaluation Criteria, Annual Business Plan by CEO Dominic Brown, KCERA’s voting delegation for State Association of County Retirement Systems (SACRS) and SACRS Board of

Director Elections 2024-2025, staff and committee reports. The preceding list is not all inclusive, Board Agendas and Minutes with supporting documentation are available for review at [www.kcera.org](http://www.kcera.org). The Board usually receives numerous educational items to update and inform on many pertinent retirement matters.

During the March Board meeting Verus (Investment Consultant) presentation included the fund balance and investment performance (net of fees) for the period ended December 31, 2023 as follows:

Total Assets -	\$5,545,997,689
1 Year -	9.6%
3 Years -	5.0%
5 Years -	8.3%
10 Years -	6.2%

As of June 30, 2023, the actuarial assumption rate was stated at 7.00% (expected long-term investment return) and as of June 30, 2023 current funding ratio of 68.7% (% of fund assets available to pay liabilities).

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 with the choice of in person, by audio or audio and video the next Retirement Board Meeting. The next meeting will be held on May 1, 2024.

***“Integrity is telling myself the truth.  
And honesty is  
telling the truth to other people.”***

***- Spencer Johnson***

### QUOTES

~ “All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn’t hurt.”

*- Charles M. Schulz*

~ “Old age is like everything else. To make success of it, you’ve got to start young.”

*- Theodore Roosevelt*

~ “Always forgive your enemies; nothing annoys them so much”

*- Oscar Wilde*



## 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 \$6.00 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) \_\_\_\_\_

Dept. from which retired \_\_\_\_\_

Full 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**

**BENEFICIARY:** Jacqueline Walters

**CHILD SUPPORT:** Lorraine Ramirez

**FIRE:** Scott C. Beck; Roberto Figueroa

**HUMAN SERVICES:** Jill L. Christopher; Sylvia Flores

**KCERA:** Brenda Greenwood

**KERN MEDICAL CENTER:** Arlene G. Johnson

**KERN MOSQUITO & VECTOR:** Robert A. Quiring

**PROBATION:** Pamela D. Chavez; Sandra Marquez

**PUBLIC HEALTH:** Barbara Blaine;

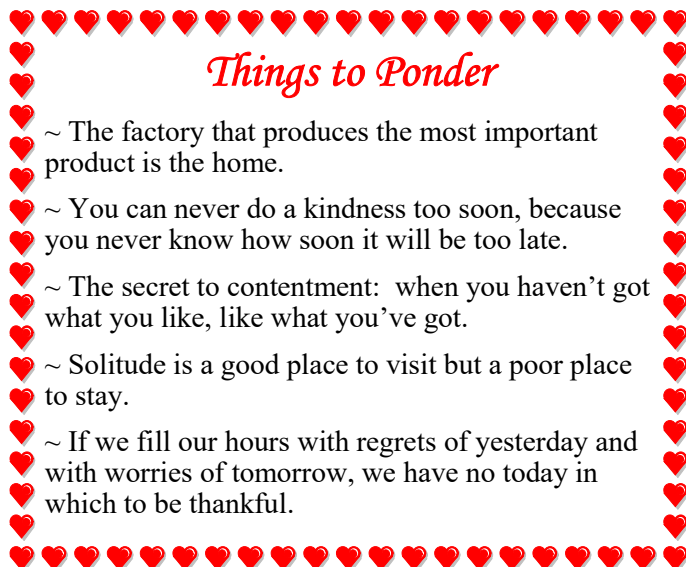
Imelda Ceya-Butkiewicz

**ROADS:** Daniel Jacobs

**SHERIFF:** Sandra Estes; Teri A. Mathis;

Dixie D. Walters

***REOKC wishes all Kern County  
retirees  
a long and happy retirement!***



**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!**

**TRAVEL TIPS**

**Celebrity Cruise Line Presents:**

**May 26 - June 6, 2025. Roundtrip Rome  
11 night Greece, Italy & Turkey Cruise  
aboard the Celebrity Ascent**

Edge Stateroom w/Infinite Veranda \$2919.00 per person  
Non Refundable rate or \$3744.00 per person with Beverage package and WI-FI.

Visiting ports Rome, Chania, Crete, Ephesus, Turkey, overnight in Istanbul, Turkey, Santorini, Greece (late departure) Mykonos Greece, Naples (Capri) Italy, Rome.

**July 16, 2025 - July 27, 2025 Roundtrip Amsterdam  
11 night Europe North cruise Iceland & Ireland  
aboard the Celebrity Eclipse**

Prime Veranda \$2505.00 per person Non Refundable rate or \$3478.00 per person including Beverage Package and WI-FI.

Visiting Ports Amsterdam, Akureyri, Isafjordur, Reykjavik, Waterford, Cork (Cobh) Amsterdam

**Nov. 28 - Dec. 10, 2025 Singapore to Hong Kong  
12 night Far East aboard the Celebrity Solice**

Prime Veranda \$1597.00 per person Non Refundable rate or \$2474.00 per person including the Beverage package and WI-FI.

Visiting Ports Singapore, Ko Samui, Thailand, Bangkok, (overnight), Ho Chi Minh, Nha Trang, Hue/Danang, Hanoi (overnight), Hong Kong

Non Refundable rate plus a total of \$220.00 in shipboard credit per stateroom. Airfare, pre or post hotel, pre paid gratuities and travel protection insurance additional on all of the above. All of the above is based on availability, per person, based on double occupancy and must be under deposit by June 1, 2024.

**Julie Salazar-Garcia  
(661) 324-6910 [cruiseport@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cruiseport@sbcglobal.net)  
The Cruise Port, 1800 Oak St., Suite D,  
Bakersfield, CA**

**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.

**Pacific Group Agencies, Inc.**

- Supplemental Insurance Plans  
Available at Discounted Rates  
**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)

- **Sunshine (Cards of Expression)**  
Josie De La Torre 661-348-4222

**KCERA Board Retiree Member**

- Phil Franey –  
[franeyp@bak.rr.com](mailto:franeyp@bak.rr.com)
- Alternate—Robb Seibly -  
[seiblyrl@gmail.com](mailto:seiblyrl@gmail.com)

**Kern County District Attorney's Office**

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

**Kern County Aging & Adult Services**

- **661 868-1000**



2023

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● County Paydays 
 ■ County Holidays 
 ■ Strata CU Holidays 
 ● Free Document Shredding

\*Strata Credit Union Branches will be closed at 3pm

2025

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

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



May & June 2024  
Time Dated Material

Official Newsletter of  
The Retired Employees of Kern County Inc.

**REOKC LUNCHEONS AT HODEL'S**

**5917 KNUDSEN DRIVE, BAKERSFIELD**

**TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2024**

**LIBERTY HALL (building north end of parking lot)**

**TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2024**

**LIBERTY HALL (building north end of parking lot)**

**Members without payroll luncheon deductions will pay at the door each month.**

**REOKC members and their spouses \$7.00 each  
Guests \$10.00**

**Doors will be open at 10:45 a.m.            Lunches served at 11:30 a.m.**

**(Payments requiring no change will be greatly appreciated)**