



# T R E N D

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

Volume MMXXVI-III

May & June 2026

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.*

***It's that time of year and Seniors have some interesting options worth considering*** (here are a few):

1. Who doesn't want to have fun and save money? Enjoy outings even more with senior discounts on various entertainment options: **AMC Theaters**: 30% for seniors 60+; **Regal Cinemas**: 30% off for seniors 60+; **Kindle E-Books**: AARP members save 50% off; **Ticketmaster**: Seniors 65+ enjoy reduced prices on tickets (discount varies); **US Museums**: Seniors 50+ enjoy discounts and special offers at museums. (discount varies); **National Park Service**: Senior Pass for people aged 62+ offers access to over 2,000 federal recreation sites. (Fun fact: this pass pays for itself after you've visited two or three parks!).

2. Seniors making the most of your budget is crucial. Before you head out for your next shopping trip, remember that there are superb discounts that shouldn't be missed. From groceries to clothing, and even medications, so taking advantage of those offers can make a big difference. Here are some to consider. **Goodwill**: Enjoy a 10% discount every Tuesday if you're 60 or older; **Kohl's**: Wednesdays are better with a 15% discount for customers 60 and older; **Michaels**: Offers 10% discount for those 55 and older; **Ross**: Dress for Less 55+ program gives you 10% off your purchase on Tuesdays;

**Walgreens**: Provides discounts for those 55+ or AARP members, making health and wellness more affordable.

3. Seniors are overspending on healthcare needs. From routine medications to essential wellness products, the costs can quickly add up, creating financial strain for many. There are numerous programs designed specifically to help seniors manage these costs more effectively: **Walgreens**: Offers 20% savings online and in-store for seniors aged 55+; myWalgreens membership is required (free to sign up); **RxFreeCard**: This card offers discounts on prescription medication for seniors; **AARP Prescription Savings**: Members of this program can save an average of 61% on FDA-approved prescriptions that are not covered by insurance.

4. Don't feel like cooking? don't worry—there are plenty of senior-friendly dining deals. From quick bites to more formal settings, plenty of restaurants offer great options for seniors looking to dine out. Offers may vary by location, so always check ahead: **McDonald's**: discounts on coffee and beverages (55+); **Wendy's**: get free coffee or other discounts depending on location; **Golden Corral**: Senior discount varies by location; **Denny's**: Offers a 55+ menu with smaller portions, and better prices; **Subway**: 10% off (60+) varies by location; **Old Country Buffet**: Daily discounts for seniors (55+); **Burger King**: 10% discount on purchase depending on location (60+); **Long John Silver's**: 10% discount or discounted beverage (55+).

5. If you enjoy **exploring** new places, taking **vacations**, or visiting **family**, always remember to check for travel discounts, including major cruise lines which offer senior discounts, making **cruising** a fantastic and affordable option for exploring the world in comfort.

Hope all of these have been helpful and will bring better health and enjoyment into your life. Have a Wonderful, Healthy and Safe, May & June. Don't forget we want to see you at our next REOKC Luncheon – see this newsletter for more information.



Affiliate:

 PACIFIC GROUP AGENCIES



## Great Discounts for Members Coming soon

Because of your membership in the Retired Employees of Kern County and its partnership with AMBA, you are automatically entitled access to the **Passport** discount program. It provides REOKC members with exclusive savings at thousands of local and national merchants. It is designed to increase your purchasing power and offers meaningful discounts at the places you love most.

### Key Benefits

- **Extensive Savings:** Access to 15–50% off at participating locations, covering categories such as dining, travel, electronics, and entertainment.
- **Family Sharing:** A single membership can be shared with immediate family members, allowing spouses and children to use the discounts.
- **Mobile Accessibility:** Using the Passport Mobile app, employees can locate nearby perks, search by category, and redeem deals on-the-go.
- **Unlimited Use:** Discounts can typically be used without limits, providing immediate gratification and consistent value.

### Major Discount Categories

The program includes thousands of offers across diverse sectors:

- **Dining:** Significant savings at over 2,500 local and national restaurants, from fine dining to fast-casual.
- **Travel:** Up to 20% off at participating hotels plus deals on rental cars, cruises, and vacation packages.
- **Entertainment:** Discounted tickets for cinemas (AMC, Regal), theme parks ([Disney](#), Universal), and sporting events.
- **Lifestyle & Services:** Savings on childcare, pet supplies, health and wellness (gym fees, yoga), auto repairs, and home maintenance.

REOKC is proud to offer these great discounts as part of our ongoing commitment to delivering meaningful value to our members. And, consider this, saving 20% on shopping or movies easily covers the cost of your REOKC membership dues for the year. Stay tuned for more details.

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## History

Over Twenty years ago, one of REOKC's members, a very talented and knowledgeable gentleman wrote many informative historical articles for the TREND for many years. Walter Stewart was also an artist and included his own art work in many of his articles.

This treatise was originally published in 2015 - ENJOY!

### THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER

By WALTER E. STEWART

As we know, the words of our national anthem are from the poem, Star-Spangled Banner, by Francis Scott Key. Key was born in 1779. He was a 35-year-old lawyer held prisoner on a British frigate in Chesapeake Bay, Maryland, September 13, 1814. The British shelled Fort McHenry during the day and through the night. The morning after the shelling, standing on the deck of the British frigate, Key saw our tattered flag still flying. He was emotionally moved and deeply inspired. The experience compelled him to write the poem, Star-Spangled Banner. It was published 7 days later in the Baltimore Patriot, September 20, 1814.

If you heard the music of an old English drinking song by John Stafford Smith without words and were asked if you recognized the tune, you would probably say it is our national anthem. It became our national anthem after the first stanza of Francis Scott Key's poem, Star-Spangled Banner, was incorporated with the old English drinking song.

President Woodrow Wilson unofficially proclaimed it our national anthem in 1916; but it did not officially become our national anthem until March 2, 1931, when the 71st Congress passed a unanimous bill, signed by President Herbert Hoover, making it official.

(Article continued on Page 4)



### LEVAN INSTITUTE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

REGISTRATION OPENS ON  
MONDAY, JULY 13 at 10:00 a.m.  
FOR FALL CLASSES!  
[www.levaninstitute.org](http://www.levaninstitute.org)

At the Levan Institute for Lifelong Learning we celebrate Healthy Aging with over 40 unique classes focused on the interests of those 55+. We will post the fall semester class schedule by mid-June so go online for a "sneak peek" before registration opens at 10:00 am on Monday, July 13. Join us to learn, explore, make new friends, and have some fun! Check out the website or call us: [www.levaninstitute.org](http://www.levaninstitute.org) (661) 395-4431





**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**

**Princess Cruise Line - Diamond Princess  
Japan 9 Nights RT Tokyo**

September 15 - 24, 2027

Balcony cabin \$2773.00 per person based on double occupancy. Tokyo, Toba, Osaka, Kochi, Shimizu Mt. Fuji & Busan So. Korea  
Above rate includes port charges, taxes and the Princess Plus package. Additional would be airfare & insurance and pre night hotel.

**Escorted Bus tour with Globus  
Visions of Japan, Tokyo to Kyoto**

10 Nights October 11 - 27, 2027

\$6659.00 per person single supplement \$1380.00  
Small group departure 18 to 24 Passengers  
Many sightseeing areas included. Tokyo, Mt. Fuji Area, Matsumoto, Takayama, Shirakawa, Kanazawa & Kyoto  
Above is the Tour. Additional would be airfare, Insurance and pre/post nights.

**Celebrity Cruise Line  
Summit Panama Canal Cruise**

April 18 - May 3, 2027 15 nights

Balcony Cabin \$3960.00 per person  
Tampa, Cartagena, Transit the Panama Canal, Costa Rica, Puerta Vallarta, LA  
Above rate includes all port charges & taxes.  
Additional would be airfare, insurance, gratuities and beverage package.

All rates are based on availability and can change at any time.

**Julie Salazar-Garcia  
(661) 324-6910 [cruiseport@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cruiseport@sbcglobal.net)  
The Cruise Port, 1800 Oak St., Suite D  
Bakersfield, CA 93301**

**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 \***

Mary Lou Bennett 661-871-5270

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

- **Sunshine (Cards of Expression)**  
Josie De La Torre 661-348-4222
- **Scholarship Program**  
Nancy Warnick 661-205-6333

**KCERA Board Retiree Member**

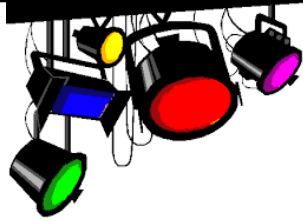
- Jeff Frapwell –  
[jrf7500@gmail.com](mailto:jrf7500@gmail.com)
- Alternate—Robb Seibly -  
[seiblyrl@gmail.com](mailto:seiblyrl@gmail.com)

**Kern County District Attorney's Office**

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

**Kern County Aging & Adult Services**

- **661-868-1000**



## Spotlight on

**REOKC Member:  
Tracy Richardson**

### **Retired AND still moving!**

Congratulations are in order to Tracy Richardson and her mixed doubles partner Mark Desimone who took 1st place or GOLD at the National Pickleball Tournament on November 19, 2025! Tracy also placed 3rd place or BRONZE in women’s doubles with her bestie Glenda DeVries. Many thanks go out to the Bakersfield Community and the many friends, family, coaches, clinics, and lessons taken that helped prepare them for this huge tournament! In 2027, these teams have plans to start their journey again on the road and path to Nationals!

The 2025 USA Pickleball National Championships was held at the Barnes Tennis Center in San Diego from November 15–23. More than 2,500 players from 47 states and 20 countries competed, supported by thousands of passionate fans.

To qualify to play in the national tournament, teams need to win 1st place or a “gold medal” at a golden ticket event. There were 18 golden ticket tournaments throughout our nation held between January and July 2025, only 4 in California. Tracy Richardson and her mixed doubles partner Mark Desimone aka “lefty Mark” played in San Jose, California and got 2nd place; so in July 2025; they had one more chance to qualify. In the heat of July, they took 1st place in Newport Beach, and won their golden ticket entry into the Nationals!

For anyone wanting to learn the “fastest growing sport in America”, there are classes thru the Bakersfield College Levan Institute (REOKC. Org). Also, there are free pickleball classes held at various parks in Bakersfield every month. For more information, please reach out to the City of Bakersfield Parks and Recreation at 661 752-PARK (7275).

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### **The Many Benefits of Reading for Older Adults Muscle Up Your Memory**

Want to be a true muscle-head? Research proves that reading strengthens your brain. Studies have proven that people who engage in mentally stimulating activities such as reading have slower rates of memory decline than those who do not.

Reading exercises your memory, which is critical to the short-term recall of everyday events. Regular mental workouts such as reading can strengthen the brain’s neural network, helping your mind become more receptive to learning and memory retention.

Data shows that engaging in frequent cognitive activity later in life can reduce the rate of decline by 32%.

### **Getting Lost in A Book Can Help You Find Peace of Mind**

The mental benefits of reading can improve your quality of life. Research shows that reading beats listening to music, having tea, or going for a walk. Studies found that once participants dove into a book, their heart rate and muscle tension relaxed in a mere six minutes.

Frequent readers are also less prone to anxiety and acting impulsively. Reading improves analytic skills, making readers more likely to think before reacting and better equipped to process information, prepare for life’s uncertainties, and reduce their anxiety.

### **Reading Can Protect Against Dementia and Depression**

One of the most promising benefits of reading for older adults is that it can help preserve brain structures important to cognition later in life and reduce the speed of cognitive decline.

Research suggests that adults in their 70s who engaged in mentally intense hobbies, such as reading, from ages 20-60 build a reserve of neuronal connections and are less likely to develop dementia and Alzheimer’s disease.

### **Reading Can Be a Great Way to Stay Social!**

Joining a book club is a great way to boost your reading habits, meet new friends, and enjoy social discussions. Book clubs can offer stimulating conversations where you and others can share insights, socialize, and have fun together.

Whether it’s history, sports, gardening, romance, or all of the above, you can find a book that interests you. Given the proven health benefits of reading, even adding a small daily dose to your routine could be just what the doctor ordered!



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Bakersfield, CA 93303

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May & June 2026  
Time Dated Material

Official Newsletter of  
The Retired Employees of Kern County Inc.

**REOKC LUNCHEONS AT HODEL'S**

**5917 KNUDSEN DRIVE, BAKERSFIELD**

**TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2026**

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

**TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 2026**

**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: First 2 \$10.00 each - 3 or more will be \$20.00 each**

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

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

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