

SCARE NEWSLETTER *Vol 19 Iss 1 March, 2008*

Published quarterly by

SONOMA COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED EMPLOYEES

Member of CRCEA - California Retired County Employees Association

SCARE, P.O. Box 5513, Santa Rosa, CA 95402

www.sonomacountyretirees.com

Calendar of Events for 2008:

Business Meetings:

Feb. 26th	Vets Building
May 27th	Vets Building
Sept. 23rd	Vets Building
Nov. 25th	Vets Building
Fourth Tuesday	
Time: Social	12:30 P.M.
Meeting	1:00 P.M.

BOARD MEETINGS:

Jan. 9, Mar. 5, May 7, July 2, Sept. 3, Nov. 5
 First Wednesday of every 2nd month.
 All members welcome.
 Call to verify time and location.

LUNCHEON MEETINGS

Mar. 11, Jun. 10 Sept. 9, Dec. 9.
 Second Tuesday of every quarter month.
 1:00 P.M.

Our next luncheon will be at the Quail Inn at Oakmont. Follow Highway 12 to Oakmont and continue on the main road until you come to the golf course on the left hand side at the Quail Inn.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

February 2008

Greetings for the New Year and Best Wishes for 2008 from your SCARE Board of Directors and President.

On February 5, the Board of Supervisors considered a proposal from the CAO and HR to limit the County's contribution to retiree health insurance to \$400 to \$500/retiree/month. Many of you turned out for the Board meeting and expressed your concerns by wearing red "Save Retiree Health" buttons. Even more of you wrote letters and emails expressing your concerns about the proposed substantial reduction in County support of retiree health insurance. Thank you for your support.

After a two-hour hearing the BOS adopted the CAO and HR recommendations that HR "begin the meet and confer process and make initial proposals to all bargaining units on retiree medical benefits in order to create a fiscally sustainable retiree medical program that costs between 5% to 7.5% of payroll..." More importantly to us, the Board directed staff "to retain the implicit subsidy in the rate setting for under (age) 65 retirees at this time..." and re review with the 2010 OPEB report. A number of other directions were included in pages 15 and 16 of the CAO/HR recommendations and can be found on the website : www.sonomacountyjlmcb.org. The County proposal for a \$400 to \$500 flat monthly contribution to a retiree for County-sponsored medical insurance does not include guaranteed cost of living adjustment to account for future medical inflation (medflation). Rather, it anticipates the County not having a specific responsibility for future inflation, which would quickly reduce the real value of the \$500 as medical premiums soar in future years. Single retirees in Kaiser would be fully covered while the majority of retirees in the County Health Plan (CHP) would fund their portion of the insurance premium doubled if they have a dependent. There is mention of possible ad hoc COLA's if money is ever available.

The implicit subsidy describes the pooling of retiree and employee health insurance rates that has occurred in Sonoma County for over 40 years. As employees, we and the County paid a little extra premium so that retirees ` premiums would be less due to a blended approach. The County has temporarily backed off separating employee and retiree rates until the 2010 OPEB actuarial report can be reviewed. The County says over age 65 retirees have their own

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SCARE Board Meeting Highlights

January 7, 2008

Those present: Directors; Tom Ford, Carol Bauer, Mark Kostielny, Ron Piorek, Phyris Tobler, and Greg Jacobs. Others; Diane Edwards, Ray Meyers, Bob Gillen, and Donna Hawk.

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Carol Bauer. President Gearhart was away on personal business. The meeting was in lieu of the regularly scheduled Board Meeting for January 9. The purpose of the meeting was to prepare letters to the Association members regarding the January 15 meeting of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors (B.O.S), and to discuss how the Association would address the Board at the meeting regarding health insurance and or meetings with individual Supervisors. Since there was no formal agenda for this meeting, I will attempt to summarize the points raised by various individuals.

Carol Bauer summarized our association's efforts on the Joint Labor, Management, Board Committee. Carol said that the County had made no proposals or recommendations in these meetings, and that the recent County proposal "came out of the blue."

SCARE had made no formal proposals during the JLMBC sessions which were confined to discussing various insurance scenarios to establish costs. No one had requested "decoupling" retirees from current employees for the purpose of health insurance coverage.

Tom Ford observed that the JLMBC meetings were a "failed strategy" on the part of the CAO's office. The unions would not enter into any agreements until time for negotiations of their MOU's. Tom proposed that we present only a few big points before the Supervisors, e.g., no "decoupling" since it is a breach of our vested rights. Tom would ask the BOS why they are in a hurry in the face of uncertain actuarial information.

Health insurance should be negotiated piecemeal with the various county groups. Any cost projected into future is going to look big. Health insurance costs are no different. The County should realize that if we win any lawsuit re health insurance, "we will never come back to discuss the issue." There will be many lawsuits around the country and they will have to be "played out."

Tom is concerned that other County groups may "cut us loose" if they can get better treatment. We do have the best health coverage of other comparable counties, but they have COLA's for their pension. We really need to stay in the same pool as all employees. He noted that the County may throw out their first actuarial study because they have signed up a new company. Tom reiterated that the County could deal with the issue over several years, and that we must tell BOS we are willing to work with them.

(Continued on Page 4)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2008

Officers:

- **President** - Dick Gearhart
Tel No. - 707-577-0227
email - sgearhar@pacbell.net
- **Vice-President**- Carol Bauer
Tel. No. - 707-874-9149
email - bfuzzy51@aol.com
- **Secretary** - Greg Jacobs
Tel. No. - 707-823-7341
email - [gjacob48@gmail.com](mailto:gjacobs48@gmail.com)
- **Treasurer** - Phyris Tobler
Tel. No. - 707-795-6926
email - phyris@sbcglobal.net

Directors:

- Nova Burton
- Tom Ford
- Carl Jackson
- Mark Kostielney
- Ron Piorek
- Gary Wilkening

- **Retirement Board** - Mike Chrystal
- **Alternate** - Tom Ford
- **CRCEA Rep** - Dick Gearhart
- **Alternate** -

- **Membership** - Donna Hawk
Tel No. - 707-575-7357
email - hawki41@comcast.net

- **Newsletter Editor** - Nova Burton
Tel. No. - 707-544-3445
email - njburton@sbcglobal.net

SCARE Presidents:

1980-81- Doris Strassler
1983-83- Homer Oliver
1984-85- Horace Crow
1986-86- Robert Hager
1987-88-89- Jane Thom
1990-91- Robert Connor
1992-93- Carline Pryor
1994-95- Robert Nichols
1996-97- Richard Ergo
1998-99- Carl Jackson
2000-01-02- Maureen Latimer
2003-04- Don Head
2005-06-07-08- Dick Gearhart



IN MEMORIAM

Richard McGlinchey Albert Frey
Susan Hood
Wayne Morehead
Constance E. Smith

*A life that touches the heart of
others goes on FOREVER.*

Wayne Morehead Remembered:

SCARE lost a valuable member on November 14th with the passing of Wayne Morehead after a courageous battle with angiosarcoma. Wayne was the SCARE Treasurer for seven years serving three Presidents and setting up our current system to maximize our dues income. Wayne retired in 1992 from Public Works where he served as the Supervising Accountant. Carl Jackson.

Wayne joined our organization approximately 10/17/1991. He first became Treasurer in 1998. He was a very nice man, with a great sense of humor and loved to play golf in all kinds of weather. Wayne was a Supervising Accountant for the Sonoma County Dept. of Public Works and retired after 20 years. He is missed by all who knew him in the SCARE organization. Nova Burton

The SCARE Newsletter is printed quarterly. The information printed in SCARE is believed to be accurate and from reliable sources. However, no responsibility is assumed by SCARE, the Editor, or the writers for inaccuracies in

Welcome New Members:

Erne Ballinger -
Judy Barsuglia - County Counsel
Daniel Bessette - Sheriff
Silvia Boggs - Hum. Serv.
Donna DeBaets - Reg. Pks.
Judy Depenau - Health Serv.
Janice Dorn - Clk/Rec/Assess.
Carolyn Estrada -
Kathleen Farrelly - Cnty. Counsel
Jill Golis - Cnty. Counsel
Douglas Gow -
Lynette Gosch - Hum. Serv.
Harry Johnson - Superior Crt.
Donna Katosh -
Carol Kronberg - Associate
Carol Martinez - Health Serv.
Gretchen McIndoe -
Relia Merrifield - Health Serv.
Gail Morningstar - Probation
Karen Olson - Dist. Attny.
Diane Ostrem -
Joan Pierce - Dist. Attny.
Patricia Pombo - Inf. Sys.
John Riley - Probation
Rosalie Root -
James Shrum - Dist. Attny.
David Spiegler -
Paula Stamp - P&R Mgmnt
Jane Weiskoff - Sup. Crt
Sarah Wood -
Petrilla Wright - Hum. Serv.
Carol Zeidman - Hum. Serv.

TOTAL MEMBERS: 1422

*Thank you for joining SCARE,
please remain active and
participate in the many activities
we offer.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

FISH:
SEE LETTER ON PAGE 5

SCARE LUNCHEON:
Our SCARE luncheons for 2008 are moving to the Quail Inn Restaurant at Oakmont. The DoubleTree Hotel prices have just gotten too high. Quail Inn has a good selection of entrees at reasonable prices and can accommodate either a small number or a large crowd. They also offer buffets and we will be asking people who attend the March luncheon whether they would like to try a buffet in June or September. Quail Inn does not offer banquet luncheons on Saturday so we are moving our luncheons to **Tuesday**. Since we are all retirees, hopefully **Tuesdays** will work for most people. Phyris Tobler

Congratulations to New Retirees:

Vikkie Borelli-Bd.ofSu
Caryl Burns-Health S
Fred Constantine-Au/C
Florentino Curiel-Tr/P
Larry Erskine - Sheriff
Raymond Fleming-Sher
Charles Greve - InSys.
Randall Jones - InSys
Donald Krell -Inf.Sys.
Sylvia Mathias -SupCrt
Stephen McCann-SupCr
Keneth O'Neil-TR/PW
Kathlene Petretti -
Clk./Rec./Assessor
Anita Pollard-Hum.Serv
Charles Roberts-Health
Sarah Robinson-Health
Rhonda Smart -
Clk./Rec./Assessor

2007 Sonoma County Retirement Association (SCERA) Update:

SCERA managed to end calendar 2007 with earnings in excess of 9%. This is quite an accomplishment, given the volatility in the stock market and the considerably lower returns generated in many portfolios. SCERA needs an 8% return to offset the cost of retiree benefits, interest payments to employee members, and administrative costs.

Based upon the 2007 results and the positive earnings generated for the past five years, the Benefits Committee of SCERA unanimously voted to grant the 80% purchasing power COLA and a 1% COLA to all retirees at its January 2008 meeting. Unfortunately, the stock market took a troubling downturn in the later part of January, significantly reducing a good portion of the SCERA's reserves that have accumulated over the past five years. Recognizing its commitment to long-term retirees who have lost significant purchasing power over the years, the Retirement Board voted to grant the 80% purchasing power COLA effective 4/1/08. The Board deferred consideration of the 1% COLA until the February 21st meeting, in the hope that the volatility might settle down.

At its January meeting, the Retirement Board also discussed new State legislation that will permit 1937 Act Counties such as Sonoma to participate in a pooled Retiree Vision Benefit Program at what appear to be competitive rates. The Board directed staff to provide further details on the program, in the hope that it could be implemented sometime in the next year.

Mike Chrystal

(Minutes from Board Meeting Continued)

Mark Kostielny stated that we should be treated as current members, that there be no decoupling, and that any insurance proposal must address "medflation".

Health insurance is a vested right for retirees. Since we had no COLA like the comparable counties we were reminded that we still had the valuable right to health insurance. Mark made his own career decisions based on the promised health insurance coverage, and was encouraged to make that representation to others. Mark argued that we need to show the BOS specifically (Continued)

(Minutes from Board Meeting continued)

how their proposal would affect retirees on a fixed income. Dianne Edwards can address that at the BOS meeting, since she had so many employees with lower wages

Carl Jackson said that Tim was surprised that the CAO had not given any feedback in the work groups that had been established over the past year and a half. Smith acknowledged that things had changed as far as relations between the CAO and employees, and retirees. Smith acknowledged that he and Supervisor Reilly were in the same boat as retirees because of their impending retirements. Smith may like the idea of a longer waiting period for an individual's eligibility and spouse. Smith expressed concern for those who have been retired the longest.

Gary Wilkening stated that Smith agreed that "promises had been made" re the right to health coverage. He and Carl argued to Smith that it was not appropriate to simply assign a percentage to health insurance as a cost in the County budget, and that any changes have to be made in one year. Smith is concerned about the State budget.

Phyris Tobler observed that the County was getting away from established negotiating custom by trying to deal with retirees first over other employee groups. She was concerned that the County offered no proposal to deal with inflating medical costs.

The group concluded by noting that there are MOU's which mention retiree health insurance. That SEIU has filed a grievance for the County already changing coverage without negotiating, when it imposed a new scheme establishing the County contribution next fiscal year at 85%. It was agreed that Tom Ford, and Mark Kostielny, and Diane Edwards would address the BOS on the 15th. Carol Bauer would assist by providing salary figures for lower paid employees to show what impact the County proposal would have. We adjourned at 12:45.

Respectfully submitted, Greg Jacobs Secretary

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

February 26th, 2008
Santa Rosa Veterans Bld.
12:30 social, 1:00 meeting

AGENDA
UPDATE on RETIREE HEALTH

FROM THE MAIL BOX:

Original letter written by Betty Seacord to BOS
Return Message -----
From: [Valerie Brown](#)
To: [Betty & Howard](#)
Sent: Friday, January 11, 2008 9:04 AM
Subject: Re: Change to Separate retirees from SCAMC and from active employees.

Thank you for contacting me with your concerns. I will guarantee you no options are being kept from the supervisors - we are exploring every option. Our goal is to protect a retiree health benefit that is sustainable over the long term. However, we have been pretty clear since this discussion began, there will be changes - especially in light of the state announcing a 14 billion dollar deficit which will cause our county severe layoffs. This is not an easy decision and we are turning over every possible option to see if we can find a fit that keeps the county from massive layoffs. This issue has been postponed from Tuesday, January 15th until probably Jan 29th....please check with our office for the exact date. Again, we have tried to listen to the former employees with health care benefits and assure you we are running the numbers on every scenario.

>>> "Betty & Howard" <seacords@comcast.net>
1/9/2008 12:05:26 PM >>>

As a long time retired County Employee the considered cuts will not effect me but I object for future and present employees who later will retire and not benefit from the originally promised insurance coverages. County Hirees are usually people willing to work hard through their working years. They anticipate lower dollars monthly take home but knowingly plan their retirement years will be well funded by themselves and their employer. For such a future they do not jump from job to job and employer to employer and give their best to the job(s).

Please do not consider selling out these fine people so that future hirees are just being hired to do the job and bring home a check, not thinking is the job well done. Your future County of Sonoma certainly will suffer with this grade of employee. In my years we did the things that needed to be done, no problem or question asked. By my year of retirement new programs were brought in and the new hirees did only that which was on their job description. My associates never thought, I do not have to do this or it is so boring as we heard from those that were brought in to help us. Help us, they did not and it was then our nature to work harder to get the necessary
(Continued)



(Betty Seacord Letter Cont'd.)
duties done. Such dedicated persons you will never see again unless you continue to make Civil Service jobs what they should be, secure, comfortable to live with and worth the years of ones life dedicated to such employment. The money situation in todays world is certainly bad, dwindling and a change is needed but let us make the change to improvement for the better long term and not spoil the long term picture by cutting corners.

Thanks for listening. We old timers will be there listening on the 15th of January hoping you will not cut off future benefits for those willing to give their all for you now and in the years to come.

Betty Seacord
6320 Stone Bridge Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95409-5824

Approved for publication by Betty Seacord
and Supervisor Valerie Brown

December 31, 2007

Sonoma County Association of Retired Employees,

Dear Friends of F.I.S.H.

Thank you for your generous gift of \$98.00 dollars and two checks for \$75.00 dollars.

We had some lean months and your gift enabled us to keep our shelves filled during the busy holiday season so our clients who needed emergency food received enough to add joy to their holiday.

Thank you for your much needed support, kindness and generosity to F.I.S.H.

F.I.S.H. Board of Directors.

(President's Message Continued)

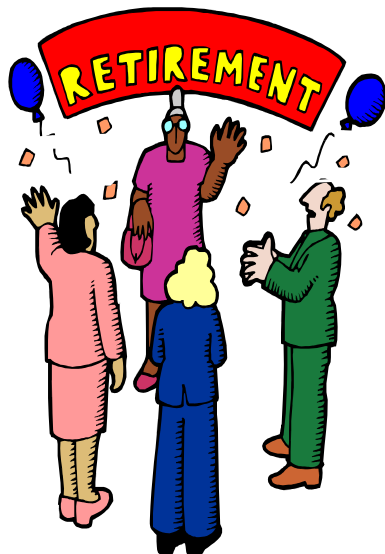
separate, lower health insurance rates since Medicare pays the bulk of their medical costs. (County sponsored health insurance is primarily valuable to over-65 retirees for prescription drug and catastrophic coverage.) The CAO/HR recommendations also proposed phasing in the \$400 to \$500 approach over three years, somewhat mitigating its initial impact on retirees. Unfortunately, the County's proposed approach will eventually force most retirees into Kaiser Plan, negating any real choice of health care for County retirees due to higher CHP costs. For out-of-area retirees, there is a recommendation to offer additional health plan options for retirees outside California and less expensive Medicare supplement programs (if they can be found). This time it appears the County will either be negotiating with employee organizations first or with unrepresented employees and SCAMC simultaneously rather than using us and unrepresented employees as the trend setters. Note that we will be holding the next SCARE business meeting on Wednesday, February 26th, at 12:30pm, at the Santa Rosa Vets Building. We will be reviewing the impact of these County proposals on retirees and discussing our next steps to protect retiree health insurance.

Also, the March 11 SCARE luncheon is different in two ways from past luncheons: the location and the day of the week. We have moved for 2008 to the Quail Inn at Oakmont and to Tuesdays to secure much more favorable rates than the Doubletree offered us.

Please consider allowing SCARE to use your email address to electronically communicate with you. See the information on email offerings. We look forward to seeing you on the 26th of February at the Vets Building in Santa Rosa.

Dick Gearhart,
SCARE President

ENJOY YOUR



Financial Statement December 31, 2007

Checking	526.02
Money Market	10,611.63
Savings	5.72
CD	5,606.60
CD	<u>10,554.79</u>
Total	\$ 27,304.76

SCARE lost \$1,674 in 2007. We had much higher expenses due to legal fees and postage required to send multiple notices to our members. Overall, we are still doing very well financially.

As of October 31, 2007, SCARE had 1070 members and 294 associate members.

Trips 4-u Time 4 A Getaway!

I specialize in day and extended group trips to destinations around the Bay Area; however, we go around the world! I work and you relax and enjoy!!!

CALL NOW ABOUT MY AVAILABLE TRIPS
I publish a new flyer of trips every couple months.

Upcoming trips include:

- Theater Performances; San Francisco Outings,
- Day Trips, Overnight Trips, Several Day Trips, and those long getaway trips!
- Yellowstone National Park; San Antonio, Texas; Dancin' with Gershwin; USS Hornet; Swedish Festival in Kingsburg; 12-day Mexican Riviera Cruise - with San Francisco departure and return.

It is easy to travel! Just pick up the phone and call us, we will take it from there!

(707) 544-7748

more information is available at:

WWW.STERBA.COM/SRO/TRIPS4u

Correcting Information and Offering Option of Newsletter by Email

SCARE expenses for postage have gotten very high as we try to keep members updated on threats to retiree health insurance coverage. We have had to send out the Newsletter and several messages with 1st class postage. The last notice was sent via email for those retirees for whom we have email addresses. We have also done one notification by phone to save postage.

In doing this, we have found that we have quite a few wrong numbers and email addresses and need to update our database. We are also checking to see which of our members would be willing to regularly receive the Newsletter and other notices via email rather than snail mail.

Please complete the following form, checking boxes if you are willing to opt for email, and return it to SCARE, P.O. Box 5513, Santa Rosa, CA 95402. We thank you for your help.

-----cut here-----

Name _____

Phone # _____

Email _____

I am willing to get messages [] and/or Newsletter [] via email rather than snail mail.

**JOIN SCARE !!!!
TO STAY INFORMED**

If you would like to join the SCARE organization and continue to have a say in the future of your benefits, go to our website for an application form:

www.sonomacountyretirees.com

and mail to:

SCARE, P. O. Box 5513, Santa Rosa, CA 95402.

AARP TAX-AIDE

AARP's Tax-Aide IRS certified volunteer tax preparers will again offer their services to provide free tax returns with electronic filing to taxpayers of all ages with middle to low income -- with extra care to those over 60. Tax-Aide is the nation's largest free volunteer run tax counseling and preparation service available to all taxpayers. No appointment necessary; first come, first served. Taxpayers should bring their 2006 tax return as Tax-Aide is not allowed to keep a copy, and all 2007 income statements. Social Security form 1099-R can be used as identification. All other 1099 forms issued for 2007 are also needed. If a taxpayer sold any stock, the original cost must be provided. FREE Basic Tax Preparation & E-File at all Locations --

Sonoma County AARP Tax-Aide Locations for 2008

Location address Tentative Hours

- Cloverdale Regional Library
401 N Cloverdale Blvd, Cloverdale , CA 95425 Wed 6 pm-9 pm
- Cloverdale Senior Center
311 N Main St, Cloverdale , CA 95425 Thu 11:30 am-2 pm
- Finley Community Center
2060 W College Av, Santa Rosa , CA 95401 Tue & Thu 9 am-1p
- Healdsburg Senior Center
133 Matheson St, Healdsburg , CA 95448 Mon & Fri 9 am-1 pm
- Oakmont Village
6633 Oakmont Dr Rm D/G, Santa Rosa, CA 95409 Mon & Wed

- Petaluma Senior Center
211 Novak Dr, Petaluma , CA 94954 Mon 9 am-2:30 pm
- Rohnert Park Senior Center
6800 Hunter Dr, Rohnert Park , CA 94928 Fri 9 am-3 pm
- Russian River Senior Center
15010 Armstrong Woods Rd, Guerneville , CA 95446 Wed. 9:30 am - 2 pm
- Santa Rosa Bank of America
2420 Sonoma Ave, Santa Rosa , CA 95405 Tue 9 am-2 pm
- Santa Rosa Rincon Valley Library Sat 1-5 pm
6959 Montecito Blvd, Santa Rosa , CA 95409 Mon 3 pm-7 pm
- Santa Rosa Senior Center
704 Bennett Valley Rd, Santa Rosa , CA 95409 Mon & Wed 8:30 am-3:30 pm
- Sebastopol Vet Bldg
282 High St , Sebastopol , CA 95472 Thu 9 am-2:30 pm
- Vintage House Sonoma
264 1st St E, Sonoma , CA 95476 Mon & Wed 9 am-1 pm
- Windsor Senior Center
9231 Foxwood Dr , Windsor , CA 95492 Thu 9 am-1 pm