

SCARE Newsletter

Sonoma County Association of Retired Employees

Published Quarterly

May 2016

Volume 28 Issue 3

Calendar of Events 2016

General Membership

Meetings

Steele Lane Community Center in Santa Rosa at 1:00 PM—Social at 12:30

5/24/16, 8/23/16, 11/22/16

Luncheons

Quail Inn in Oakmont at 1:00 PM

6/8/16, 9/14/16, 12/14/16

Board Meetings

1:00 PM Location changes so call Board member first.

5/4/16, 7/6/16, 9/7/16, 11/2/16

Many members have agreed to get notices and newsletters via email. This saves money and trees and lets us get info to you more quickly, which is really important as we work to protect retiree health benefits and take legal action. Plus you get the newsletter in color and can increase the font for easier reading!! If you are willing to get the newsletter and notices via email, send an email to communications@sonomacountyretirees.com authorizing Kathy Wertz to send them to you. Please add that address to your address book so spam filters let it through.

President's Message by Carol Bauer

It is with great sadness that I report that Eeve Lewis, a member of the SCARE Board, died recently after a long battle with a rare form of leukemia. Eeve will be greatly missed. Along with being a very nice person, Eeve was always willing to take on any challenge and had extensive background with how the County and the Board of Supervisors operates (she served as clerk to the BOS along with her many other duties). Her expertise in many areas was something that we all relied on as we took on the challenges the SCARE Board has been dealing with. Something you may not have known was that Eeve loved to travel and made good use of her retirement to do so. Hawaii was one of her favorite places but she made numerous trips to Europe, attended the Kentucky Derby, and many other places.

Eeve's death leaves an opening on the SCARE Board. Anyone interested in being considered for the SCARE Board can contact any board member - contact info is on page 2 of this newsletter and on our website.

LEGAL UPDATE

I know many of you are waiting to hear what the County offered during our recent negotiations. We did agree to a tentative settlement of the lawsuit; however we cannot discuss any details before the proposed final settlement is completed. I will say the process was difficult and we did not get nearly all that we wanted and deserve. With that in mind, the settlement proposal does provide some assurances for the future, which is good since it appears that the County would like to cut retiree benefits further. This was shown in the March 8, 2016 budget report to the BOS (it's at the very end of the report if you want to check it out online—look for BOS agenda for that date). The final settlement agreement will require ratification by you, the membership. We hope to have the final offer available for review soon at which time we will send it to all SCARE members and set a special meeting dedicated to discussing the offer and voting on it. I am sorry I cannot give you more information at this time but we are legally required to wait until the document is finalized to give it to you for your review. If it has been released by then, we may be able to discuss it at our May 24th Membership Meeting but no voting would take place.

As we move into summer I hope we can all enjoy the gorgeous Sonoma County weather and scenery. After the long drought our hills are once again green and gorgeous. I hope you can all find the time to enjoy what we have here in Sonoma or where ever you happen to live. As my Dad used to say , "enjoy every day as there are no do-overs in life."

Board of Directors

Officers

President — Carol Bauer

707-874-9149

bfuzzy51@aol.com

Vice President — Greg Jacobs

707-823-7341

gjacobs48@gmail.com

Secretary — Patty Hamley

707-579-1726

phamleyis@hotmail.com

Treasurer — Phyris Tobler

707-795-6926

phyris@sbcglobal.net

Immediate Past

President — Dick Gearhart

707-577-0227

sgearhart@pacbell.net

Directors at Large

Bob Bulwa

Lou Maricle

John Pels

Joe Romano

Alix Shor

Retirement Board

John Pels

Alternate: Neil Baker

Committee Chairs

CRCEA Rep: John Pels

Alternate: Dick Gearhart

Legal: Phyris Tobler

Membership: Patty Hamley

Luncheons: Patty Hamley

Newsletter Editor: Lonna Necker

Programs: Bob Bulwa

Scholarships: Bob Bulwa

Facebook: Bob Bulwa

Board Meeting Minutes can be viewed at our website or you can request a copy from Patty Hamley.

Minutes of the SCARE Business Meeting of February 23, 2016

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by President Carol Bauer at 1 p.m. There was a quorum, as more than 25 members were present.
2. **Guest Speaker:** Bob Bulwa introduced Dr. Rick Flinders, a Family Medicine doctor with Sutter Santa Rosa Regional Hospital. Dr. Flinders is a member of the Physicians for a National Health Program, Sonoma County Chapter, and explained the Single Payer Health Care system that is being proposed. This system would extend Medicare to all and control costs of the healthcare industry in this country. Dr. Flinders answered many questions from the audience. More information on Single Payer: www.pnhpcalifornia.org and www.retireesforsphc.org.
3. **Legal Update:** Carol announced the SCARE Legal Committee will travel to Walnut Creek on March 16 and 17 to once again meet with the County in mediation to try to settle our lawsuit. If this is not successful, the next step would be a bench trial before Judge Wilken.
4. **JLMBC:** Phyris reported there will be two new health insurance plans offered this year for those under 65 years of age: Sutter and Western Health Advantage. The County is offering to pay all union employees an amount equal to 80% of the Kaiser HMO plan, with a 4% increase in 2017. This increase is not being offered to SCAMC, probably because retirees are tied to that group.
5. **Bylaw Changes:** Carol explained the sections of SCARE's Bylaws being updated and asked for a vote of the membership present. The Board-recommended changes appeared in our February Newsletter with the changes highlighted in red print. 100% of the SCARE members present voted to approve the Bylaw changes. Note: Final approved Bylaws will be available for review at the SCARE website or by contacting Patty Hamley.
7. **Next SCARE Luncheon:** Carol reminded members of the March 9th SCARE Luncheon at the Quail Inn in Oakmont. Reservations (\$18 for members/\$22 for non-members) must be sent to Patty Hamley by March 3rd. Fliers were included in the February Newsletter and also placed on the table at today's meeting.
8. **Drawing:** 54 retirees signed today's roster. Rhonda Odegard and Carline Pryor won the drawing for free luncheon tickets to the SCARE Luncheon at the Quail Inn on March 9 or a future luncheon.
9. **Adjourn:** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted , Patty Hamley

SCERA Update Report—April, 2016 by John Pels

Brian Williams and Michael Gossman were elected Chair and Vice Chair of the Retirement Board, and Greg Jahn and David Sundstrom were elected Chair and Vice Chair of the Investment Committee. David Sundstrom actually retired in March, so Donna Dunk, who was appointed Treasurer, Tax Collector, Auditor-Controller on April 5th, will take his place on the Retirement Board. Donna will fill all of David's Committee positions and assume the Vice Chairmanship of the Investment Committee.

On May 5th, at 9:00 a.m., SCERA will call a special Board meeting to be presented with the Actuarial Valuation for the plan year ending December 31, 2015. This valuation will use the new investment earnings assumption of 7.25% (previously 7.5%), the new salary assumption of 3.5% (previously 4.0%), and other demographic and economic assumptions adopted in 2015 as a result of the triennial experience study. A summary of retirement data and trends will also be presented along with the valuation.

SCERA staff is diligently working on the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the plan year ending December 31, 2015, and our external auditor, Brown Armstrong, is wrapping up the external audit. The CAFR will be presented to the Audit Committee at its meeting on May 25th beginning at 8:30 a.m., and to the Board at its meeting on June 23rd, beginning at 8:30 a.m.

SCERA executive management staff and a few Board members have been observing the Independent Citizen's Committee on Pension Matters and offering objective factual information about how the retirement system is administered, from funding, to operations, to investments. The Committee is making a concerted effort to understand the differences between the County's and SCERA's financial and actuarial reporting and looking for ways to make the fiscal picture between the two entities more understandable as it relates to the total pension obligation. The Committee intends to present a report to the Board of Supervisors in July regarding the County's pension reform measures and transparent communications.

JLMBC Report by Kathy Wertz and Phyris Tobler

At the March 31st meeting of the JLMBC we were told the final cost increase for the County Health Plans PPO and EPO was to be 25.9%. That increase was 5.9% higher than originally proposed because there was another increase in claims cost upon final review. Claims cost for the County Health Plan has been very high over the last year.

SCARE members asked if that increase could be held as the original 20% by using money from the County Health plan reserves fund to make up the difference. The committee supported that idea and the Risk Manager said she would support that position with County Administration.

During the next several months the JLMBC will be evaluating the County Health Plans to find ways to reduce cost or find alternative health plans that will provide coverage for out of area retirees and employees. The costs have been soaring over the last couple years and some retirees are being hit especially hard because they have no other options. We'll keep you updated on the committee's progress.

Sonoma County managers, unions, and retirees have been working with other public agencies in Sonoma Co. to come up with ways to decrease health care costs. **Look on page 7 for more detail in the article by Alix Shor**

More Information on Shingles Vaccinations by Phyris Tobler

There seems to be a lot of confusion related to getting the shingles vaccination. In the February Newsletter, we put in some information on shingles vaccinations which said that there was no cost for this if it was given in the doctor's office rather than going to the pharmacy. This was information for those on the County Health Plan and it was information given me by HR Benefits personnel. However, it is not as easy as it sounds. The shingles vaccination, brand name Zostavax, has a very short shelf life so all doctors don't keep it in stock. Additionally one of our members recently was able to get it from his doctor but had to pay full cost up front and it is quite expensive. Anthem has said they will reimburse him after Medicare pays its portion. Zostavax is covered by Medicare Part D which is for prescriptions.

I recently asked Care Counsel to clarify whether AARP insurance would cover Zostavax. After researching with AARP, this is what she reported: It is covered under the AARP insurance under Part D (prescriptions); it requires prior authorization; and it can be administered at the pharmacy for the claim to be paid. **Note: Zostavax is a Tier 4 prescription so there is a significant co-pay. If you are switching from CHP to AARP, it is best to get this vaccination while you are still under the County Health Plan as it will cost a lot more under AARP.**

I suggest that whatever plan you are under, if you run into problems getting this vaccine, call Care Counsel at 888.227.3334 and ask for their assistance. If you want more information about this vaccine, you can go to the CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) website at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/shingles/vacc-need-know.htm>. Also talk to your doctor even if that person is not providing the vaccine.

**SONOMA COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED EMPLOYEES
LUNCHEON**

When: Wednesday, June 8, 2016
Where: Quail Inn Restaurant, Oakmont Golf Club, 7035 Oakmont Drive., SR
Time: 1 p.m. (This is a sit-down luncheon.)
Cost: \$18.00 (tax and tip included) for members & associate members
\$22.00 (tax and tip included) for non-members and guests

M E N U

Mixed Greens Salad Dinner Rolls Coffee & Tea

Entrées:

- (1) Sauteed Chicken Breast with Marsala Wine and Shallots, Rice Pilaf, Steamed Vegetables
- (2) Pork Tenderloin with Roasted Grapes, Rice Pilaf, Steamed Vegetables
- (3) Penne Pasta with Pesto Sauce and Steamed Vegetables

Dessert: Ice Cream Sundae

Please be sure to indicate your preference of entrée for lunch.

RESERVATIONS AND CHECKS DUE BY WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1st.

(We can take late reservations until Thursday, June 2nd, if you call Patty Hamley at 579-1726)

Non-Responsibility Declaration: All luncheons or other activities arranged for by Sonoma County Association of Retired Employees (SCARE) are for the convenience and pleasure of the members and their guests who desire to participate. SCARE does not assume any responsibility for the well being or safety of the members or their guests when attending SCARE activities.

Cut here

Make checks payable to "SCARE" and send to: **Patty Hamley**
2112 Berkeley Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Name _____	Choice of Entrée _____
Name _____	Choice of Entrée _____
Name _____	Choice of Entrée _____

Member _____ Associate Member _____ Non-Member _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____ Phone # _____



Congratulations New Retirees and *New SCARE Members* (in italics and bold)

- David Boffi—District Attorney
- Louise Bayles-Fightmaster—Courts
- Roni Bonson—Water Agency
- Judith Brennan—Human Services
- Michael Bruno—VOM
- Dennis Davis—Water Agency
- Emilce Deller—Human Services
- Connie Douglas—Sheriff's Office**
- Shaun DuFosee—Sheriff's Office***
- Mignon Evans - Human Services***
- Toni Gail - Human Services***
- Sue Gallagher—County Counsel
- Jeff Gleason-Jaynes - Probation***
- Andrew Guenther—Transportation & PW
- Bren Hawthorne - ISD/Repro***
- Ronald Johnson - Fairgrounds***
- Glen Lawrence—Sheriff's Office
- Fernando Marquez—Human Services
- John Mason—ISD
- Cathy McFann—Health Services
- David McGahee - Health Dept./Mental Health***
- Margaret McIntyre—Health Services
- Janet McKenna—PRMD
- Harvey Minnick—Health Services
- Evelyn Mosqueda Brown—Human Services
- Ilene Moran - Human Services***
- Cheri Nielsen—Courts
- Lori Norton—Health Services
- Caroline Olin—Water Agency
- Eva Osborn—Courts
- Teryl Phillips- General Services***
- Carol Presho—Regional Parks
- Steven Shupe—County Counsel
- Robin Smith—Human Services
- Sigrid Swedenborg—PRMD
- Tawny Tesconi - General Services***
- Christopher Thomas—County Administrator
- Karen Thompson - Superior Court***
- Becky Weislow—Human Services
- Robert Wells - Sheriff's Office***
- Roger Wheeler—Valley of the Moon
- Kathleen White—Human Services
- Amanda Wilmeth - Probation***

Encourage Fellow Retirees to join SCARE!

While we have added many new members, we are stronger with even more. If you see people you know on the above list who have not joined SCARE, please encourage them to do so. That way they can continue to have a say in the future of their benefits. You can call Patty Hamley at (707) 579-1726 to get a copy of our application form or go to our website.

In Memoriam

Our deepest sympathy is extended to the families and friends of the following retirees:



- Sharon Aguilera*
- Evelyn Bennett*
- Lester Bennett*
- Ann Burow*
- Judith Connelly*
- Diane Gonsalves*
- Theresa Hansen*
- Floyd Johnson*
- Eeve Lewis*
- Phyllis Tobener*

DONATIONS TO THE LEGAL FUND

We would like to acknowledge our many members who have donated to our legal fund. Members who have donated since the last Newsletter are listed below. Members have been very generous. The SCARE Board thanks all who have donated so generously toward our legal expenses.

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Carol and Chris Bauer | Carline Pryor |
| Sharon Falsey | Gary Wilkening |
| Pamela Johnston | Edith Wong |
| Virginia Jonas | |

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

CRCEA held it's Spring Conference in Bakersfield this year, and it was well attended - all 20 1937 Act counties were represented, as well as affiliate representatives and the president of the Retired Public Employee's Association of California (they represent around 24,000 retired CA state employees receiving CalPERS pensions). Over the three days of the Conference, a broad array of presentations were made and many discussions about maintaining pension/retiree health benefits were held. Here is a sampling:

Day One

Prior to the actual Opening Session at 1 PM, there was a well attended "Special Roundtable Session" where delegates introduced themselves and briefly described challenges they are facing in their county. Although 90 minutes was allocated, the discussion stretched to almost two hours and could have gone longer. Not surprisingly, pension security and health benefit challenges were the dominate topics.

The full Conference opened with a surprising (and very good!!) rendition of the National Anthem by California Highway Patrol Sgt Robert Rodriguez. After he impressed everyone with his vocal skill, he later that morning presented two programs sponsored by the Highway Patrol, their Senior Volunteer Program and their "Age Well, Drive Safe" program. Everyone was so interested in the Age Well Drive Safe program that it will be offered (it's a two hour program) at the October CRCEA conference in Walnut Creek.

The Chair of the Kern County Board of Supervisor's also helped welcome all the attendees by giving us a 15 minute overview of the attributes and attractions of Bakersfield and Kern County. His initial comments got all off to a good start, he first asked how many had visited Bakersfield before - and most everyone raised their hand. Then, he asked how many had visited Bakersfield for recreation or personal enjoyment - and No One raised their hand!! After a good laugh he then proceeded to educate all to the many interesting opportunities for anyone visiting the area.

The afternoon session then had a presentation on the American Cancer Society's "Relay for Life" fund raiser and a very informative session on Advance Health Care Directives by a Kaiser Permanente Social Worker. The day ended with break out sessions of the various CRCEA committees and an early evening Hospitality Reception where we got a chance to network and discuss items of concern at more length.

Day Two

The morning session had a presentation on "Elder Abuse and SCAMS" by the Kern County District Attorney, followed by a presentation on "Amputation Prevention" by a cardiologist that is involved in cutting edge (pun intended!!) technology for dealing w/ circulatory issues. Both were very informative and made me think SCARE might want to provide similar presentations at upcoming general membership meetings. The morning session ended with a "town hall" discussion on "Retirees Working Together," with many good thoughts about better collaborating and coordinating efforts to preserve public employee retirement benefits.

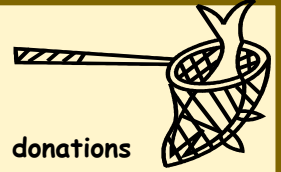
The afternoon session was spent focusing on (anti) pension initiatives legislative updates and political considerations for dealing w/ them. This was broken up by an energetic and informative presentation on the Ronald McDonald House (RMH) system by the Bakersfield RMH Director. It was interesting to learn how the RMH system has grown from a single Philadelphia home in 1974 to over 300 chapters in 63 countries currently providing assistance to millions of families around the world and in the US. Following the RMH presentation, we held another round table discussion session on current issues/concerns from local associations. Again, the primary focus of discussions was on pension security and combating medflation (constantly increasing medical costs).

The day ended with another hospitality reception and the Conference Banquet that night where we all had further opportunity to network and discuss concerns with other attendees.

Day Three

The Business Session comprised the morning's activities, with reports from all the officers and committees, and a briefing/discussion of the fall conference in Walnut Creek. I think all were glad to end a bit early so those long trips home could be started!!

Luncheon Donations for F.I.S.H. Friends In Service Here - A Food Pantry for All



Our March luncheon donations for FISH totaled \$215.

Thank you, Carl Jackson, for placing collection baskets on the tables and delivering the donations to F.I.S.H.

SCARE Membership and Financial Information

As of March 31, 2016, we had 1392 members and 157 associate members. We are no longer including our financial information in our newsletter, but if you would like to get the year-end financial statement, just contact me (contact information is on page 2). I can send information to you via email or the postal service.

Phyris Tobler, Treasurer

SCARE MEMBERS!!!! Feel free to contribute articles you think may be of interest to our members. You may submit them to any Board Member—see member emails and phone numbers on page two of this newsletter. Articles will be published on a space-as-available basis.



PUBLIC SECTOR HEALTH CARE TASK FORCE - by Alix Shor

In 2015, Sonoma County Supervisors adopted a proposal by public sector unions to convene a Public Sector Health Care Task Force. Two SCARE members, Alix Shor and Marilyn Foster, were a part of the task force. The goal was to identify and recommend strategies to reduce employer health benefit costs without increasing them for employees, retirees and their families.

Senior officials from eight public employers and 11 unions met in five half-day working sessions over six months to hear from experts on market consolidation, price inflation, and the lack of provider price transparency and competition as large contributors to soaring health benefit costs.

Task Force members concluded that health market consolidation and opacity undermine the goal of affordable health care. They recommend that self-funded plans (such as the County Health Plan) pursue new strategies that establish price transparency, spur competition, expand choice, and reduce provider billing and collection costs. We are working to contain costs especially for those retirees who can only use the County Health Plan. We will keep you posted.

Updating Contact Information

If you move, you need to give your **change of address** to the following organizations. They do not share information with each other.

SCARE - send changes to Phyris via email at phyris@comcast.net, or address to 7675 Blair Ave., Rohnert Park, CA 94928, or call 707 795-6926. I also need changes of phone numbers and email addresses.

SCERA - You get your pension check from them. Contact them to report changes at 433 Aviation Blvd., Suite 100, Santa Rosa, CA 95403, or call them at 707 565-8100.

Sonoma County Human Resources Benefits Unit - They handle health, dental, and life insurance and send out Open Enrollment Booklets. If they don't have your current address, you may not received your Open Enrollment Booklet in time to make changes before the deadline. Contact them at 575 Administration Drive, Suite 116C, Santa Rosa, CA 95403, or benefits@sonoma-county.org, or 707-565-2900.

And if I don't hear from you, this is what happens: Mail and newsletters were returned with no forwarding address for the following members - **Mildred Albright, Mary McDonald, and Anne Newman**. Attempts to contact these people by phone and/or email have failed and we have no way of contacting them. If anyone knows how to reach them, would you please contact them and ask them to call me (# shown on page 2) or give me their number and I'll call the person.

Thanks to our members, I have been able to locate several retirees.

Thank you, Phyris

Sonoma County Association of
Retired Employees (SCARE)
P.O. Box 5513
Santa Rosa, CA 95402

Address Service Requested

General Membership Meeting—May 24, 2016

Steele Lane Community Center DeMeo Room

415 Steele Lane (between Mendocino & Hwy 101 - best approached from Mendocino)

12:30-1:00-Meet and Greet

1:00-3:00—General Meeting

**REMEMBER TO COME AT 12:30 FOR PRE-MEETING NETWORKING WITH FRIENDS
AND COLLEAGUES—SNACKS PROVIDED**

Please join us if you can

AGENDA

BUSINESS MEETING

- I WELCOME**
- II SPEAKER— Fernande Bencze of Alliance Reverse Mortgages**
- III LEGAL UPDATE - We may be able to provide information on the settlement agreement by the time of the meeting**
- IV JLMBC REPORT**
- V OTHER**