



# SCARE Newsletter

Sonoma County Association of Retired Employees

Published Quarterly May 2022 Volume 322 Issue 2

## Calendar of Events 2022

### Membership Meetings

5/24/22, 8/23/22, 11/15/22  
Meetings are at 1pm at Finley  
Center with lunch at 12:30

### Luncheons - Legends

Luncheons have been canceled  
because COVID makes it  
unsafe. This may change.

### Board Meetings

1:00 PM Dates may change so  
call Board member first.  
Meeting are via Zoom

5/4/22, 7/6/22, 9/7/22 and  
11/2/22

### Get Newsletter by Email:

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. Plus you  
can increase the font size for  
easier reading!! If you are  
willing to get notices and the  
newsletter via email, send an  
email to  
communications@sonomacou  
ntyretirees.com authorizing  
SCARE to send them to you.  
Please add that address to  
your address book so spam  
filters let it through.

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.

## President's Message by Alix Shor

At last, we on the SCARE Board feel it is safe enough to return to in-person Membership Meetings and we are so happy to announce it will be at the Finley Center on May 24, 2022, at 12:30. To celebrate we are providing boxed lunches for you and will need you to let us know your choice by **May 16<sup>th</sup>** (see page 2 for choices). Also please note that for safety reasons we are requiring vaccinations with booster, and limiting attendance to 50 so get your reservations in early.

For those of us who are not able to attend in-person, we will also be broadcasting the meeting on Zoom. The program will be starting at 1:00 PM. The Zoom link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89001099524?pwd=TUdVRXNtRExCbndzTORUZjZMN0haQT09> If you prefer to phone into the meeting dial (669) 900-9128. The meeting ID is 890 0109 9524 and the passcode is 667371.

We have invited Cyndi Foreman, Division Chief/Fire Marshal, Sonoma County Fire District, to review for us the necessary steps to help protect us from wildfires. And then on a lighter note we have three speakers from the Sonoma County Regional Parks. See page 3 for further information on the topics and the speakers.

At our February Membership meeting, Julie Wyne gave an overview of how our pension fund is doing, which is very well. It is over 90% funded and earnings have been very good. The fund is very well diversified and is constantly monitored. John Pels, our former retiree SCERA Board representative, has written a report about what's happening with the SCERA Board currently. It also outlines how some investment decisions are made. See page 5 for his report.

I hope to see you either at the Finley Center or on Zoom. In the meantime, enjoy this lovely spring weather.

## Good News for People with Hearing Loss

According to the NY Times, roughly 38 million Americans report some degree of hearing loss and I would guess that in our group, most have experienced some hearing loss. Only a minority of people who could benefit from hearing aids use them as they are very expensive and Medicare does not cover them.

The good news is that last year, the Food and Drug Administration started the process to create a new category of government approved hearing aids that you can buy without a prescription, much as you can now buy reading glasses at the drug store. It is hoped these might be available later this year and cost is likely to be more like a few hundred dollars instead of a few thousand.

**Board of Directors**

**Officers**

**President** — Alix Shor

707-538-0708

alixshor@sonic.net

**Vice President** — Phyris Tobler

707-795-6926

phyris@sbcglobal.net

**Secretary** — Patty Hamley

707-579-1726

phamleyis@hotmail.com

**Treasurer** — Chris Bauer

707-874-9149

bfuzzy51@aol.com

**Immediate Past**

**President** — Carol Bauer

707-874-9149

bfuzzy51@aol.com

**Directors at Large**

Ed Clites

Shaun Du Fosee

Cora Guy

Lou Maricle

John Pels

Bill Robotka

Kathy Young

**Retirement Board Retiree Reps**

Tim Tuscany

**Alternate:** Neil Baker

**Committee Chairs & Tasks**

**Health Benefits/JLMBC:** Phyris Tobler

**Membership:** Patty Hamley

**Financial Oversight:** Phyris Tobler

**CRCEA Rep:** Carol Bauer

**Alternate:** Lou Maricle

**Newsletter Editor:** Phyris Tobler

**Facebook Coordinator:** Bob Bulwa

**Programs:** Cora Guy

**Scholarships:** Ed Clites

**Nominating:** Cora Guy

**SCCLO, ICPC, NBLC:** Bill Robotka

**Contact info on website**

**May 24th SCARE Membership Meeting**

**In-Person and Zoom**

We are looking forward to having our first in-person Membership Meeting in 2 years. It will be a hybrid meeting as we will meet both in-person **AND** stream the presenters on Zoom. During COVID we were happy that people from out of the area joined our meetings by Zoom and want to continue this practice. We will also be recording the presenters so you can go to our website after the meeting to get information at your convenience. More information on speakers is shown on page 3. We have updated technology we hope will help this process but this will be our training run.

The May 24<sup>th</sup> membership meeting will be held at the Finley Center Cypress Room. The Finley Center is located at 2060 W. College Ave., Santa Rosa, and there is lots of parking. We will be following the City of Santa Rosa meeting recommendations for a COVID safe meeting and request that you bring your vaccination cards to show at the door. **We are requesting your initial shots and at least one booster.** There is a 50-person limit for this meeting so please make your reservations/orders soon.

In celebration of resuming in-person meetings, we will be providing food for this meeting. Lunch will be individual boxed meals to be COVID safe. Beverages will also be provided. We are asking that you place your orders/reservations with Patty Hamley at phamleyis@hotmail.com or call her at 707-579-1726 **no later than May 16th.** Let her know which of the following options you prefer.

Turkey sandwich (includes greens, onions, tomatoes on rustic sourdough bread) with chips, pickle and cookie

Smokehouse BBQ Chicken sandwich (includes pulled chicken, BBQ sauce, white cheddar, frizzled onions on rustic sourdough bread) with chips and cookie

Mediterranean Veggie (includes feta, greens, tomato, onion, hummus on tomato basil bread) with chips, pickle, and cookie

Fuji Apple Salad (includes greens, grape tomatoes, toasted pecans, gorgonzola, apple chips, with sweet white balsamic vinaigrette) with baguette and cookie.

The reception desk will be open by 12:00 pm. Lunch starts at 12:30 pm. The presentations and Zoom meeting begin at 1:00 pm.

We look forward to seeing you on May 24<sup>th</sup>!

Old age comes  
at a bad time...  
you finally know  
everything,  
just in time  
to forget it.



## Speakers for May 24 Membership Meeting by Cora Guy

We will have two topics given by speakers at our May Membership Meeting. We hope you will join us, either by Zoom or in-person at the Finley Community Center, 2060 W College Ave, Santa Rosa.

### Community & Home Fire Awareness

Fire Season has become an all-year-round reality in the wildland/urban landscape which makes up a large portion of Sonoma County and many other regions in the Western United States. After another extremely dry winter, fire officials are stressing the importance of community fire awareness and fire preparedness to reduce fire risk, save lives, and property.

Cyndi Foreman, Division Chief/Fire Marshal, Sonoma County Fire District, will be one of our guest speakers during the May 24th membership meeting. She has worked for the Fire Service in Sonoma County since 2001, and served on the front lines during the Tubbs, Kincade, Wallbridge, and Glass Fires.

Division Chief/Fire Marshal Foreman will provide information and guidance on how to prepare for a wildfire/urban fire event. Her presentation will cover numerous topics including:

- ◆ The importance of signing up for local emergency alerts such as NIXLE
- ◆ Creating and regularly updating personal/family disaster plans, and the key components contained within the plan
- ◆ Assembling an emergency go-bag/supply kit for yourself, family members, pets, and key items that should be included in the go-bag/supply kit.
- ◆ A list of home and property improvements that can increase our properties fire resistance.
- ◆ The importance of accessing local, city, and county websites about resources available to prepare for and recover from a fire events.

### Time to Enjoy Sonoma County Regional Parks

The Sonoma County Regional Parks Department was founded in 1967. It's stated mission is to "preserve irreplaceable natural and cultural resources and offer opportunities for recreation and education that enhances the quality of life and well-being of Sonoma County residents and visitors."

Fifty-five years later, the parks system has expanded to more than 50 parks throughout the county. Visitors can enjoy a variety of experiences from picnicking at coastal and riverside parks, mountain hiking, bird watching, boating, horseback riding, fishing, camping, playgrounds, and sports fields.

In 1998, The Sonoma County Parks Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization was established as an advocacy group to support the broader goals of the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department. The Foundation raises funds to help develop new parks and trails, sponsors programs for seniors, youth and underserved communities, as well as, provide for environmental education programs and projects to restore habitats and protect wildlife.

At our May 24<sup>th</sup> membership meeting, staff from the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department and the Parks Foundation, will join together for a presentation about both organizations.

**MELANIE PARKER, Regional Parks Deputy Director**, will provide an overview of the Parks Department, and it's plans for the future. She will discuss the opening of new parks, and efforts underway to rebuild parks that suffered wildfire damage in the past several years. Deputy Director Parker will also explain how Measure M funds are being used to expand parkland acreage and increase public access to existing and new programs in development phase.

**MARK MORLEY, Regional Parks Program Manager**, will provide an overview of park programs, focusing on programs that serve older adults and youth. He will discuss the benefits of obtaining a "Parks Pass". He will also provide information about the departments newly redesigned website that allows users to obtain a vast array of information about the department, its parks, services, and upcoming events.

**MELISSA KELLEY, Executive Director of the Parks Foundation** since 2011, will provide an overview of the Parks Foundation, and how it supports the mission, programs, and goals of the Regional Parks Department. She will also discuss the Foundation's numerous volunteer programs, such as the building of new trails, environmental education programs, and how to become a Foundation Volunteer.

## Alphabet Soup by Bill Robotka

**Independent Citizens Pension Committee (ICPC):** Despite lacking a quorum to hold official meetings, the ICPC committee did meet to review the County's "Annual Pension Report in March". I was one of the two ICPC members that reviewed and provided input last year, and although the ICPC has lost members this year, the remaining committee members (myself included) provided that function this year.

The good news is that both the CAO analyst and SCERA CEO Julie Wyne agreed with the major concerns I raised about the report, and have committed to adjusting the report - if not for this year's (because of the work/time needed to gather the needed info), then for next years submission. The concerns I raised were:

1. This report, and all others done by the County/SCERA continue to describe the population(s) involved (both active/employed and retired) as either "Legacy" or PEPRA, when the reality is that a major group of retirees are distinct - and should be shown as such - from the 3% group that the "Legacy" term is generally applied to. Folding the pre 3% and 3% retirees into one group skews the data used to describe pension benefits, demographics, and liabilities (both funded and unfunded). I made this same point last year, but they really didn't address it. They agreed to add some information into this year's report and more fully represent the three distinct groups in future reports.
2. The pension obligation bonds, in addition to lowering the interest % the County needs to service for the amounts involved, also generate substantial income for SCERA funding of our pensions. This point has never been fully developed, and I again raised it as I did last year. They did add a section of the report that shows a little about the earnings generated by the POB process, but need to go much further in developing this information into a clearer and more powerful piece of information. Especially helpful in responding to the pension critical talking points - all they ever see in "increased debt" and not the gains from these strategic funding options.

There were other points made and discussed, some of which will result in changes to this years report, but the two above are the most substantial and relevant to our interests I think.

The report was presented to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) on April 5th this year. The ICPC committee has still not been able to fill the vacant positions needed for a quorum, so the meeting scheduled for April 7th was cancelled. I am hoping that we'll have a quorum in place for the June 9th meeting.

**Sonoma County Coalition of Labor Organizations (SCCLO):** SCCLO has completed its meetings with the County on Retiree Benefits, with no agreements reached on recommended options to the BOS. Labor did hold firm and maintained a collective stand on the significant issues. Labor's recommendations were:

1. The County pursue funding a COLA for future retirees.
2. The County and Labor explore the establishment of an independent (not controlled by the County) Retiree Medical Trust for sustained funding of retiree medical benefits.
3. Longevity pay be provided to reward loyal service and promote retention of skilled employees.
4. Further options and issues need to be addressed during contract negotiations in the coming year(s).

The County agreed to none of SCCLO's proposals and has indicated a strong interest in seeking further increases in employee cost sharing. This means that it's possible the County will also be looking at options for reducing retiree medical costs for them as well. We need to remain vigilant and ready to advocate for our continued benefits.

On another issue, over 600 County employees and retirees (in all bargaining units, including management) took our (SCCLO) Downtown Sears site survey a few months back. 92% of the respondents wanted the rebuilt County center to be located at our existing campus. We shared the survey results in real-time to each of the Board of Supervisors so they could read your opinions and concerns. And at the end of the day for many reasons, the downtown project went kaput, to the relief of the majority of the workforce.

More good news has developed on this situation. Let's just say we *have a direct channel* to the project team that is currently being appointed to design our onsite county center. Let's ensure our campus is designed with as many of our best interests and preferences in mind. [Take the New Campus Survey here](#). And forward it to everyone you talk to at the County. Like before, we're taking responses from every bargaining unit and from retirees. SCARE is listed with the rest of the bargaining units even though technically, we are not a bargaining unit.

This new county campus project team consists of County leaders who will be responsible for publicly presenting their design to the CAO and Board of Supervisors. Believe me when I say we have a legitimate voice in this process, so add yours to the choir by taking this survey ASAP. As a retiree, you may have some ideas of what would have been helpful when you were working. We'll share the results when it closes in a few weeks - probably in the next newsletter.

**North Bay Central Labor Council (NBCLC):** The NBCLC has primarily been focused on politics of late. BOS campaigns, Windsor Town Council, Sheriff, and other elections have been primary topics of concern. Their strategic planning group has asked for input into, and participation by myself, in developing strategies for better educating the public about the value of public pensions. We'll see what develops, and I'll report on anything new as it happens.

## SCERA Update — Spring 2022 by John Pels

**RETIREMENT BOARD:** Safety Member Brian Williams was re-elected to his position and the Board of Supervisors appointed Supervisor Chris Coursey to replace appointed member Susan Gorin. Mr. Coursey spent his early career as a journalist for a local newspaper and he covered the pension system, so he has a working knowledge of how things are run. The Board officers consist of Brian Williams, Chair, and Bob Williamson, Vice Chair, and our Investment Committee officers consist of Greg Jahn, Chair, and Erick Roeser, Vice Chair.

**STAFF UPDATES:** Our Assistant CEO retired in June of 2021 and we created and filled a hybrid Assistant Chief Executive Officer/Chief Legal Counsel position. SCERA welcomed Cristina Hess in February. Cristina spent many years as a public defender with Sonoma County and has hit the ground running in her new pension world. We also welcomed Cheryl Enold as our Retirement Accounting Manager replacing Cathy Austin who retired. Cheryl comes to SCERA from Sonoma County's payroll division so she has a leg up when it comes to understanding the complex accounting rules that apply to us.

SCERA's Senior Investment Officer, Steve Marsh, is set to retire in November of this year and we are actively recruiting for his replacement. Our hope is that we fill the position prior to his retirement so the incumbent can benefit from Steve's wealth of knowledge and settle in to working with our Chief Investment Officer, Jim Failor, and the Board.

**OPERATIONS:** Currently SCERA Board and Committee meetings are a hybrid between virtual and in person, with the bulk of the trustees attending virtually. We are actively discussing a return to in person meetings with the WebEx platform still in use for those members of the public that wish to attend virtually. Our county has removed both the social distancing and mask mandate though both are still recommended. We expect the Governor to continue rolling back restrictions and are trying to get ahead of the inevitable repeal of the state of emergency for COVID.

The Board received the results of the triennial experience study, covering plan years 2018, 2019 and 2020, at its October meeting last year and approved several assumption changes. The most notable were a lowering of the investment return assumption from 7.0% to 6.75% in large part due to the lowering of the inflation assumption from 2.75% to 2.50%. The inflation assumption also impacts the salary growth assumption which was lowered from 3.25% to 3.00%. In the last experience study, for plan years 2015, 2016 and 2017, SCERA adopted a generational mortality table which predicts differing mortality rates for each age every year. In this study Segal recommended, and the Board adopted, a benefit-weighted mortality table which predicts mortality based upon the benefits a retired member or beneficiary is receiving. The philosophy behind this approach is that recipients with a higher benefit will likely have access to better medical care which translates into a longer life span. The new assumptions will be applied to the December 31, 2021 valuation which will be received in early May.

**INVESTMENTS:** SCERA adopted a Rule of Law guideline in late 2021 that uses a country rating guide prepared by the World Justice Institute and rates countries based upon numerous risk factors. The SCERA Board and staff view the application of this type of guideline as a necessary sovereign risk measure and believe that countries with a weak rule of law pose a threat to SCERA's ability to recover its assets in the event a dispute arises. In applying the guideline, SCERA instructed its managers to divest, where feasible, from weak rule of law countries, which included Russia, China and Mexico.

In 2020 SCERA's Investment Consultant, Aon, conducted an Asset Liability Study in preparation for the 2021 Experience Study. As a result of that study, the Board decided in 2021 to increase its allocation to both Infrastructure and Farmland with each allocation increasing from 5% to 8%. This 3% increase in each is intended to be sourced from a 2% decrease in Core Fixed Income and a 1% decrease in Global Equities. To implement the increased allocation to Infrastructure, SCERA staff and the Plan's consultant conducted a search for an additional fund which ultimately resulted in the Board's decision to commit \$135 million to the KKR Diversified Core Infrastructure Fund. The Board is currently finalizing a Farmland fund search.

## JLMBC Report by Phyris

**HRA Update:** If you are a member of the SCARE lawsuit (retired by 6/30/16), there will be another small deposit into your HRA with P&A on July 1, 2022. I wasn't able to get an exact amount but it will probably be around \$30. If you have any unpaid claims with P&A, you will receive immediate payment. If you don't have any unpaid claim, you might want to file one before that date so that you get immediate payment of whatever new money is put in your account. If you are using your card at your doctor or dentist's office, you need to know the exact amount you have in your HRA. Have the doctor charge that amount to your card and pay for the rest some other way. If the doctor charges an amount larger than you have in your account, the whole thing will be rejected.

**Delta Dental Issues:** Union reps brought up problems some employees had brought to their attention about their dentist dropping Delta Dental, mostly because they were unhappy with the amount Delta reimbursed them. .

The feedback we received from some of you on Facebook about your dentists leaving the Delta Dental system was presented to the Delta Dental Reps at that last JLMBC meeting and was very helpful in nudging them toward improving reimbursements and relations with their dentists and us.

Delta Dental and the County Benefits staff requested that we provide them with the names of dentists we know have left, or are unhappy with, Delta. They will then follow up with those practitioners to attempt to resolve any issues. So if you have the names of dentists like that, please forward to Bill ([brobotka@aol.com](mailto:brobotka@aol.com)) and he'll make sure both the County Benefits folks and Delta get that information and do something positive with it.

## It's Time to Visit A Park

We sometimes rerun articles for new members and for those who missed it the first time. Or for those who have turned 62 and are now eligible for the Federal Senior Lifetime Pass.

While there is a lot of conflicting information about best practices for staying healthy, exercise seems to be the one thing that everyone agrees improves both your physical and mental health, including improving brain functioning. Fortunately in Sonoma County, we have all kinds of county, state and federal parks within the county or near it where we can exercise and also enjoy the beauty of this country. Some of these are free (most of the Sonoma County beaches) and others charge a fee. **Here is information on ways to decrease that cost.**

### **SUPER SAVER: The National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Senior Pass**

**The Senior Pass:** There are some advantages to getting older and one of the best is the Federal Senior Pass that gets you into all National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands free as well as into some local areas. For instance, you can use it in place of the Northwest Forest Pass that is required at most hiking trailheads on National Forest Lands in Oregon & Washington, or in place of the Red Rock Pass in Sedona, AZ. There are undoubtedly many more places that I haven't discovered. This pass is available once you are 62 years old. It costs \$80 for a **lifetime** pass. That may sound like a lot but it's good for the rest of your life, and it covers anyone in your car. Entrance fee to National Parks is often \$30 and will undoubtedly continue to increase. There is an Annual Senior Pass available for \$20 if you don't want to put out \$80.

**The Access Pass:** A free, lifetime pass available to people who have been medically determined to have a **permanent disability** (does not have to be a 100% disability). It also covers anyone in your car.

**Both passes:** In addition to entrance fees, you also get camping in most National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands/Forests for half price. What a deal if you like to travel! You can buy passes at the entrance station to any National Park or online. Go to <https://store.usgs.gov/faq> for more information on all America the Beautiful passes. They have annual passes as well and you don't have to be 62 or disabled.

**California State Parks** also has a discount pass for the permanently disabled that gives you 50% off on entrance fees and camping. Go to [http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=1049](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=1049) for more information (page down as it is toward bottom of page). There are other passes available as well.

## Senior Discounts

In the membership survey we did a couple years ago, 44% of you were interested in information on senior discount programs. We ran this article last year but thought you might like a reminder, plus there are a couple updates.

We have researched both national and local discount programs that currently exist. We must emphasize that you need to **ASK** for the discount, as they are not automatic. One online site that lists national programs available to you is <https://www.theseniorlist.com/senior-discounts/>. It may appear at first that you need to pay for the list, simply scroll down and you will see the complete list. The list includes senior discounts available for chain retail stores, restaurants, grocery stores, prescription programs and travel discounts. Note: it says Kohl's only offers discount to veterans whereas more recent online info shows 15% discount to those 60+ on Wednesdays.

Locally we found that many stores that used to give senior discounts are no longer able to because of the COVID-19 shut down. Some may return as the economy improves. Here is what we did find available in Sonoma County:

Oliver's - gives a 10% discount to seniors on Wednesdays

Pacific Market - gives a 10% discount to seniors on Tuesdays.

Snoopy's gift shop gives a 10% discount to seniors.

True Value Hardware of Cotati on Commerce gives a 20% senior discount on Sundays.

Most museums, parks, and public transportation have senior discounts. The key is to ASK if they give a senior discount. If you know of any local business that gives a discount, please let us know and we will include the information in future newsletters.

## California DMV Real ID

**The new deadline for getting your Real ID is now May 3, 2023.** The DMV suggests you don't wait until the last minute as they will probably get very busy prior to that deadline. If you have a renewal coming up prior to that time, you can take care of both at the same time.

## In Memoriam

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

Dan Canet	Sandra Conte
Frank Corcoran, Jr.	Vern Evans
Frank Fritts	James Gump
Lionel Lennox	Tom Siebe
Lawrence McElfresh	



## Updating Contact Information by Lou Maricle

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

**SCARE** - send changes to Lou Maricle via email at maricles2@gmail.com, or address to 4720 Santa Rosita Ct, Santa Rosa, CA 95405, or call 707 538-7342. I also need changes of phone numbers and email addresses. 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 - **Vincent Caparo, April Harris, Shirley Norman, Cecilia Proshold, and James Shine**. 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 above) or give me their number and I'll call them.

**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. Contact them at 575 Administration Drive, Suite 116C, SR, 95403, or benefits@sonoma-county.org, or 707-565-2900.

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

### Scholarships given in 2021 to Sonoma State & Santa Rosa Junior College Students

Each year, we give 2 \$3,000 scholarships to students at SSU and 3 \$1,500 scholarships to students at SRJC. To qualify, they must have a parent or a grandparent who is a Sonoma County employee or retiree and be full time students.

The SRJC recipients in 2021 were Gabriella Gathman, Riley West, and Izel Zamora. The SSU recipients were Rachel Curtis and Jessica Cahill.

17 students applied for the SRJC scholarships for 2022-2023. Ed Clites, our Scholarship Chair, screens them and makes sure they are related to a Sonoma County retiree or employee. We will have information on this year's recipients in later newsletter.

Dear Sonoma County Retirement Association,

I am honored and so very grateful to have been awarded a Sonoma County Association of Retired Employees Scholarship! Words cannot express how much this means to my family and I. Being an older student (38) and being a full-time working mother has been no easy feat. When I decided to go back to school at this point in my life, and during a pandemic, I knew that my work ethic and achievements would be closely observed by my 4 year old son. There was no room for complacency. This award is not only humbling but also serves as continued motivation towards my academic goals.

With deep appreciation, Rachel S Curtis

Dear Sonoma County Retirement Association,

Thank you so much for choosing me to be awarded. My name is Jessica Cahill and I am twenty-one years old. I am a Sonoma County native and I recently graduated from Santa Rosa Junior College in 2020. I have obtained my Associates degree for transfer in Early Childhood Education. I am currently entering my senior year at Sonoma State University. My passion is working with children and helping them advocate for what they believe in and for their disabilities. My educational goals are to finish working on my degree and get my bachelors degree in Early Childhood Education and get my teaching credential. My future goals are to become a teacher either in elementary education or special education. I currently work as a associate preschool teacher at a bilingual preschool. I am so grateful to have been chosen for this scholarship. This scholarship will be able to help with a significant portion of my tuition as well as helping me purchase textbooks and materials needed for my classes. I am so excited to further my education at Sonoma State University. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for choosing me.

Sincerely, Jessica Cahill

## When Loneliness Is a Problem: Warning Signs

When you feel lonely, you don't need to take a test to know for sure. If you *feel* lonely, you *are* lonely. But remember: Loneliness is not a natural part of growing older. Although many seniors experience it, many others are able to establish and maintain feelings of social connection.

But it can be difficult to tell if someone close to you is affected by loneliness. After all, many seniors don't like to admit they need help. They may be afraid of seeming "old." So it's possible that someone close to you could be suffering without letting you know that they're lonely. Symptoms of loneliness can also be confused with normal signs of growing older.

Some of the signs of loneliness are:

- Sudden neglect of hygiene and personal care
- Lack of motivation
- Mysterious aches and pains
- A noticeable increase in negative thinking and pessimism
- A drop in energy levels
- Declining interest in social activities
- A change in reaching out to you—either less frequently or more frequently
- An increase in activities that might be ways of coping with loneliness, such as shopping
- An increase in hot baths or showers, which can act as substitutes for the warmth of human contact

If a senior experiences any type of personal loss, including the loss of a pet, be aware of any changes in his or her behavior. Recently moving or losing the ability to drive can also trigger loneliness. So if a friend or loved one has experienced an event that could reduce his or her social connections, reach out.

Also, be alert to feelings of increased loneliness if you've experienced a loss or a change in your own life. Addressing these feelings early on will help you in the long run since loneliness can get worse over time if not dealt with.

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



Alvarez Sabina - Human Services  
***Alves Kathleen - Human Services***  
Austin Cathy - Retirement  
Ball Dennis - Regional Parks  
Brockway Kelly - Human Services  
***Carrera Carlos – Public Defender***  
Cooper Ruth - Sheriff's Office  
Cox Carolyn - Auditor/Controller/Treasurer  
***Cunha Tracy – Human Resources***  
Curtin Daniel - Ag Commissioner/Sealer  
***Donnenwirth Lorrie - Human Services***  
***Dorn Janice - Child Support Services***  
Edwards Scott - Human Resources  
***Flamenco Artemiza - Health Services***  
Franzman Linda - Information Systems  
***Giardina E.Ric - Human Resources***  
Hamilton Robert - Information Systems  
***Harper Laura – Superior Court***  
Hartwig John - Information Systems  
Hoppe Lori - Child Support Services  
Hosmer Teri - Superior Court  
Jaap Caroline - Sheriff's Office  
Johnson Robert - Sheriff's Office  
Judy Caroline - General Services  
***Kadlec Jonathan - Auditor/Controller/Treas.***  
King Phyllis - Health Services  
Knapp Brian - Water Agency  
***Lyon Bonnie - Health Services***  
Martinez Carlos - Superior Court  
Mitchell Martin - Probation  
Muhtsun Sertsu - Sheriff's Office  
O'Dell Robert - Permit & Resource Mgmt  
Price Karen - Human Services  
***Putnam Laurel - Transportation & PW***  
Ramos Isabella - Regional Parks  
Rodriguez Moreno Miguel - Human Services  
Scharbius Joan - Sheriff's Office  
Scheiner Josie - District Attorney  
***Schiavone James - Sheriff's Office***  
***Seppeler Chris - PRMD***  
***Simon Mellor Katherine - Child Support***  
Sleeth Dorothy - Auditor/Controller/Treasurer  
Tait David - Sheriff's Office  
Uhrberg Hilda - Human Services  
Wallace Brad - Health Services

**Helpful Websites for Checking Accuracy  
of Information**

There is so much misinformation in the news and especially on social media that it is sometime difficult to know what to believe. The two websites below can help you find the facts. Factcheck primarily checks out political statements and is non-partisan, whereas Snopes is much broader. It is particularly good for info via social media. For instance, another county newsletter had some interesting "facts" in it, one of which was how golf got its name. It said it was from "Gentlemen Only, Ladies Forbidden". Sounded interesting so I was thinking of putting it in our newsletter but checked Snopes. Good thing. It's not true.

Fact Check <https://www.factcheck.org/>

Snopes <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/>



***Reminder—SCARE has its own Facebook Page  
This is a private (closed) group meaning that the  
public may not view the contents, and membership  
must be requested and approved. For those of you  
already on Facebook, it can be found by searching  
for Sonoma County Association of Retired  
Employees (SCARE)" or using the direct link:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/socoretirees>  
To join the group, go to the page and at the top  
you will see a box that indicates "Join Group."  
Once I verify you are indeed a member of  
SCARE, or are a spouse of a member, you will be  
added.***  
**Bob Bulwa**

**SCARE Membership and Financial Information**

SCARE currently has 1584 members and 153 associate members for a total of 1737 members. We do not include our financial information in the newsletter, but if you are interested, contact me and I can provide you with a copy of our financial statement (contact information on page 2). I can send this information to you either via email or postal service.  
**Chris Bauer**

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

Address Service Requested

**General Membership Meeting May 24, 2022**  
**Join us at 12:15 for lunch and In-person Meeting at**  
**Finley Community Center, 2060 W College Ave, SR —Cypress Room**  
**Reservations are Required OR**

**Join us at 1:00 pm by going to the link below for the meeting on Zoom:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89001099524?pwd=TUdVRXNtRExCbndzT0RUZjZMN0haQT09> If  
you prefer to phone into the meeting dial (669) 900-9128. The meeting ID is 890 0109  
9524 and the passcode is 667371.

#### MEMBERSHIP MEETING AGENDA

- I. SPEAKER — Community and Home Fire Awareness & Sonoma County Regional Parks—see page 3
- II JLMBC REPORT
- III. SCCLO/ICPC REPORT
- IV. GENERAL INFORMATION