



T R E N D

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

Volume MMVIII-II

March—April 2008

Jeanne Berkshire, President (661)589-3744

M. L. Bennett, Editor



President's Message Jeanne Berkshire

Welcome new members and greetings to all REOKC members! We are pleased to announce that our membership has now grown to over 3,840 and we hope this “trend” will continue! If you know a retiree who has not yet joined our organization, please encourage them to do so. Our strength and abilities to obtain and protect our benefits depend on the support of all Kern County retirees.

As those of you who have attended the first two meetings this year know, our new facility, the Norris Road Veteran’s Hall, is a great meeting place. It is spacious and comfortable with room to grow. We’re hoping more of our members will now join us and enjoy visiting with old and new friends and partaking of an inexpensive and tasty hot lunch provided by Mossman’s Catering. We also have entertainment and/or speakers who hopefully will provide information which will be interesting or useful to our members. And last but not least, the door prizes and raffle drawings seem to be a big hit with everyone. Our speaker for March will be David Anderson of WA Consulting whose subject will be “How to protect your assets from a nursing home spend-down and Medi-Cal long term care”. For April we will have Bob Iorio (a member of REOKC) who will be playing the accordion for us (he also plays at Frugatti’s every Friday and Saturday night). So come join us and bring a friend!

For almost a year now, the CRCEA Conference

Committee has been preparing for the upcoming Spring Conference here in Bakersfield which will be held at the Doubletree Hotel on April 14th, 15th and 16th. For our members who are interested in attending, we will have registration packets available at the March meeting. The line up of knowledgeable speakers will be entertaining and informative, covering subjects of interest to all county retirees. Once again we want to thank and acknowledge our sponsors for their generous contributions to help cover some of the expenses which will be incurred during the Conference:

BERKSHIRE FAMILY

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4550 California Ave., Suite 100, Bakersfield, CA

THE LAW OFFICES OF YOUNG WOOLDRIDGE, LLC
1800 30th Street, 4th floor, Bakersfield, CA 93301

We also want to thank Hodel’s for their two “Dinner for Two” gift certificates; the first was awarded as a raffle prize at the February meeting, the second will be raffled off at our March meeting. Our thanks also go out to the R. M. Parks company of Porterville for their contribution of gasoline gift cards for conference door prizes.

There’s lots happening at our next few meetings; so don’t miss out - come join us!

Jeanne



YOUR RETIREMENT BOARD

by Norman R. Briggs

Hello – Well, the New Year began with a bang and now we are already well into 2008 with winter fading into spring. Along with the April flowers you will be receiving your annual COLA increase in your April check. As you may recall your Retirement Board adopted two levels of Cost-of-living Adjustments (COLA) for our members. The first level of COLA is an adjustment based on price inflation increases up to 2.0% per year. The second level of COLA is an additional ½% to be provided from part of the Supplemental Retiree Benefit Reserves (SRBR). This was established as a result of the “Ventura Settlement” and limits the total COLA increases to members at 2.5% per year which is what you will see in your April retirement check. Be sure you spend it as we need to do our part in stimulating the economy. At the last Board meeting (Wednesday, 2/13/2008) the Board adopted the recommendation by our actuary (Milliman) which becomes effective April 1, 2008 and was:

- Total COLA Percentage to be received by each retiree and beneficiary who retired on or before April 1, 2008 will be the maximum COLA of 2.5%.

Allocation of COLA and increase in the COLA bank were other recommendations adopted by your Board. These are complex issues involving SRBR funds and the actual increases in the applicable CPI index. I have asked KCERA to provide a column for the next issue of this newsletter to further explain and delve into the labyrinth called SRBR.

Remember all our Board meetings are open and I encourage you to attend one or more of the meetings held the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month. One Board meeting, the first Wednesday of the month is the Investment Board. At this meeting there is usually a presentation by one or more of our “Money Managers”. These are the companies that we have allocated monies (millions of dollars) to for specific investments in

asset classes. The agendas for these meetings are posted the week before on KCERA’s website (www.kcera.org). I guarantee you will learn something by these presentations and you may pick and choose which type of asset allocation you would like to hear about based upon the firm scheduled to speak. We request these managers to report on:

- Review of their firm and any personnel changes.
- Brief explanation of research and investment process.
- KCERA’s performance net of fees and expenses.
- Discuss any examinations or investigations by any governmental or regulatory authority.
- Review of compliance safeguards against improper trading activity by any firm employees.
- Brief review of compliance to the fund’s investment guidelines and summary of disaster recovery plan.

The firms are limited to 30 minutes for their presentations. You may come for some or all of our meeting which usually lasts no more than an hour and a half. The meetings are held at the Administration Building, 1115 Truxtun Ave., 3rd floor conference room.

Hope to see you there.

REOKC WEB SITE

www.reokc.org

Visit our web site for current valuable information of interest to Kern County retirees, links to other organizations and contact information for members within our organization.

DO YOU HAVE INTERNET ACCESS?

TREND EMAIL LIST IS GROWING

Thanks to all of you who have signed up for membership in the Trend Email list. We are almost up to saving **\$3,200.00 per year** and that's not chump change!

We need to keep this "trend" going. :)
So, if you have internet access, please email Norman Briggs to sign up and help our budget.

To receive the TREND newsletter electronically:

Send an email to **briggs1937@sbcglobal.net** with your name, current mailing address and your email address. (Subject: TREND mailing list). OR:

Send a letter with your name and email address to:
REOKC
P.O. Box 2592
Bakersfield, CA 93303

Host/Hostess Program

During the month of December 2007,
26 volunteers worked 78 hours assisting 895 visitors
at the County Administrative Building.

During the month of January 2008,
31 volunteers worked 94 hours assisting 1,064 visitors
at the County Administrative Building.

*Since 1992 our volunteers have assisted more than
256,000 visitors to the County Administrative Complex
at 1115 Truxtun Ave.!*

There is always a need for additional volunteers.
Please contact **Mary Lou at 871-5270** if interested.

CALENDAR EVENTS—MARCH 2008

March 9 - Daylight Saving Time Begins
(Set clocks ahead one hour)

March 16 - Palm Sunday

March 17 - Saint Patrick's Day

March 20 - First Day of Spring

March 23 - Easter Sunday

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mar 11	REOKC Board Meeting Norris Road Veteran's Hall	10:00 am
Mar 11	REOKC General Meeting Lunch served Norris Road Veteran's Hall	11:30 am 12:00 noon
Mar 12	KCERA-Investment Board Meeting County Admin. Bldg.	8:30 am
Mar 26	KCERA-Board Meeting County Admin. Bldg.	8:30 am

Apr 8	REOKC Board Meeting Norris Road Veteran's Hall	10:00 am
Apr 8	REOKC General Meeting Lunch served Norris Road Veteran's Hall	11:30 am 12:00 noon
Apr 9	KCERA-Investment Board Meeting County Admin. Bldg.	8:30 am
Apr 23	KCERA-Board Meeting County Admin. Bldg.	8:30 am

LUNCHEON MENU



March 11th, 2008

Salisbury Steak
Mashed Potatoes w/bacon gravy
Vegetable Medley—Spinach Salad
Rolls—Chocolate Cake
Iced Tea, Coffee, Water

April 8th, 2008

Lemon Chicken
Red Potatoes—Broccoli Salad
Fruit—Rolls
Apple Cobbler
Iced Tea, Coffee, Water

**PAYROLL DEDUCTION FOR
MONTHLY LUNCHEON**

SAVE A BUCK!!

If you sign up for payroll deduction for your luncheon cost, you will only be charged \$4.00. If you buy a ticket at the luncheon, it will cost \$5.00.

**AUTHORIZATION FOR DEDUCTION
RETIRED EMPLOYEES OF KERN COUNTY,
INC. MEMBERSHIP DUES**

I hereby authorize and direct you to deduct five dollars (\$5.00) per month from my pension warrant as an additional elective payment to the Retired Employees of Kern County, Inc. This deduction shall commence with the next pension payment. I understand that this authorization and membership in the Retired Employees of Kern County, Inc. organization is voluntary and may be revoked by me, in writing, at any time in the future.

Name _____ Social Security # _____

Signature _____ Date signed _____

(Send to: KCERA, 1115 Truxtun Ave., Bakersfield, CA 93301-4639)

**Application for Membership in REOKC
and Authorization for Deduction of Dues**

I receive a retirement and/or survivor's allowance from Kern County. I hereby authorize the Kern County Employees Retirement Association to deduct from my monthly retirement benefits, dues of one-dollar (\$1.00) per month for my membership in REOKC, and to pay such deductions monthly to that organization.

Name (print) _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Telephone () _____

SSN _____

Signature _____ Date _____

(Send to: KCERA, 1115 Truxtun Ave., Bakersfield, CA 93301-4639)



"WELCOME!"

**NEW MEMBERS OF THE
RETIRED EMPLOYEES OF
KERN COUNTY**



Linda Anderson—Library, Linda Bamford—Bldg. Inspect., Linda Banales—Mental Health, Mary Bird—Sheriff, James Brackeen—Ag. & Measure., Aurora Cruz—County Clerk, Jim Edwards—Garage, Mary Gonzales—County Admin., Esperanza Haluska—KMC, Dennis Harvey—D.A., Peggy Hume—Parks & Rec., Paul Hussey—Sheriff, Paula Jones—Mental Health, Sherrie Leonard—Superior Court, Frank Lopez—Airports Enterprise, Kathy McKay—Human Services, Phyllis McQuilliams—Health, Vicki Menchaca—KMC, Robert Miller—D.A., Mary Morton—Human Services, Lorita Myers—Aging & Adult, Michele Nash—Child Support, Steve Oddone—K.C. Water Agency, Michael Page—D.A., Larry Parker—Fire, Billie Rider—Assessor, Joyce Simmons—KMC, Mark Stacy—Parks & Rec., Marianne Turner—Treasurer-Tax Coll., Randall Turman—Sheriff, Lisa Wehagen—Sheriff, Kathleen Wilber—Library, Charles Wimmer—Fire, Clara Yocum—Sheriff

Previously Retired:

Craig Foy, Billie McFarland, Harold Reed, Lawrence Richmond

Beneficiaries:

Pagasa Aguda—Auditor Controller, Arlene Boren—Fire, Geneva Davis—Roads, Juan Espanta—KMC, Helen Hoffman—Fire, Opal Howard—Fire, Wynema Ketchum—ITS

MOVED?

Be sure to notify **KCERA** (the Retirement Office) at **1115 Truxtun Ave., Bakersfield, CA 93301-4639** as soon as possible in order to receive important communications from **KCERA** and the **TREND** from **REOKC**.

KERN COUNTY HISTORY



by
WALTER E. STEWART

It is not likely sheep will be the first topic discussed when delving into Kern County history. Nevertheless, sheep are an intrinsic entity of our past and presence. They are a national source of food. Their wool has provided clothing for our nation for well over 200 years. Sheep were brought to California in 1769. California was a Mexican territory at that time. Sheep multiplied to an estimated two million by 1825. Half the sheep population was under the charge of the California mission chain founded by Father Junipero Serra.

Let's skip forward in time to the 1860s. Spanish, French and Basque sheep herders, with their incredibly intelligent Border collie dogs, migrated to Kern County. One can envision sheep grazing on unrestricted Kern County land a hundred and fifty years ago. Many of the original sheep grazing areas have been lost to the inevitable change of land usage. Some areas where we walk today are where sheep grazed yesterday. For example, the city of Delano covers an early sheep grazing expanse. A large sheep camp occupied an area where the former Bakersfield Inn was located. Sheep may have grazed where your home stands today.

The Tejon Ranch, Kern County Land Co. and Miller and Lux are among the original proprietors of the Kern County sheep industry. Many descendants of the early Spanish, French and Basque families that pioneered the local sheep industry reside in Bakersfield and Kern County. Their assimilation into Kern County is an absolute enhancement to our culture. The most recognizable aspect of Kern County's local sheep heritage is the engenderment of Bakersfield's unique and famous Basque restaurants.

“Trying to plan for the future without knowing the past is like trying to plant cut flowers.”

Daniel Boorstin

“HELPING HANDS” PROFILES

\$ \$ \$ \$ \$

Feeling lucky? After checking in with the luncheon reservation hostess, at our regular monthly luncheon/meeting, you will want to stop at the next table where Harold and Karen Yingst are selling raffle tickets for the door prizes which will be distributed after the general meeting.

Harold retired in 1988 as a Captain with the Fire Department. Karen worked for the Bakersfield City Schools for 30 years, starting out in the cafeteria and retiring as a Special Ed Aid. They met in 1981 when they were both married to their first spouses and were doing a lot of traveling with the Sundowners of Good Sam's Club. They both lost their first spouses within a few months of each other in 1999. However, Karen and Harold remained friends and were married in 2001.

Karen was born in Hutchinson, Kansas and moved to Bakersfield in 1966. Harold was born right here in Bakersfield; after all these years, he's thinking he just might make Bakersfield his permanent home. Harold has three boys from his first marriage and Karen has two boys and one girl. Together they have 16 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren. In her spare time, Karen likes to crochet and Harold is a “handy man” around the house, fixing things and doing carpenter work. Of course, their main hobby is still traveling; this year will include an extended trip up the Oregon coast.

Since his retirement, Harold has been a member of the Kern County Firefighter's Welfare and Benefit Association and went through the chairs and was President of the Kern County Firefighter's Retiree Association. He has been involved in REOKC for about 8 years now and he and Karen have been selling raffle tickets at our luncheons for about 3 years. Most members will probably agree that the wonderful meals and entertaining and enlightening speakers are not the only thing they enjoy at the meetings; watching their raffle ticket numbers and winning seems to be a big attraction. Thanks to Karen and Harold for doing a great job!



HEALTHY NOTES

by Audrey Cochran, RNCS,CCCN

Last winter I ate something which had lingered too long in my refrigerator, because I didn't want to waste it. I ended up being wasted, with lingering diarrhea despite yogurt, Pepto-Bismol, and prescriptions from my doctor. Running out of ideas after a month of treatment with no cure, he sent me for a colonoscopy. Not wanting to repeat that again, I now keep my refrigerator fairly empty, since usually I'm cooking only for myself, and discard food if I have the slightest doubt about its age or appearance.

But that might not be enough. A year ago *Consumer Reports* published results of their testing of 78 chickens for each major brand including such well known names as Tyson and Foster Farms, and found that salmonella was found in 3-5% and campylobacter in 77-89%! They recommended that you buy chicken the very last thing before you head to the checkout line, choosing a well-wrapped package placed in a plastic bag to keep it from touching other food. Store in your refrigerator at 40 degrees or below no longer than 2 days or freeze it. And of course, scrub in hot soapy water the knife and cutting board used to cut up the chicken.

But I was lucky. Salmonella and campylobacter infections can cause reactive arthritis, and campylobacter can cause Guillain-Barré syndrome, resulting in paralysis or death. According to an article in the January 14, 2008 *NurseWeek*, 24% of the population risk for campylobacter is related to eating restaurant prepared chicken. (If it's pink, raise a stink! Insist that you get a well done one.)

However, there's more to worry about than these two bacteria. Pregnant women have long been warned not to eat the soft cheese favored in Mexican cooking, because it can harbor listeria, a cause of congenital mental retardation. Listeria is also found in hot dogs, processed deli meats, smoked seafood, meat spreads, prepackaged turkey sandwiches, and pâtés. Typically it is found in food refrigerated for long periods. Listeria causes less than 1% of reported food borne illnesses, but 28% of all deaths from that cause.

Then there is E. coli. This bacteria grows in the intestines of most creatures, helping in the digestive process. But there are some varieties which can cause severe gastrointestinal illnesses. One theory is last year's spinach scare occurred when irrigation water was contaminated by overflow from a pasture. Cows are ruminants with multiple stomachs designed for digesting grass. When fed grain, their normal bacteria mutate and produce shiga toxin, causing illness. The toxin is found in carelessly processed beef, and in contaminated produce. It's not enough to wash produce, because the bacteria can be internalized in vegetables grown in soil enriched with contaminated manure. So much for the superiority of "organic" produce fertilized with "natural" manure instead of chemicals.

Maybe it's best to treat happiness like a deer in the forest. Sometimes it will emerge from the woods and pay you a visit. But it dislikes undue attention, and if you chase it, it will run away.

Phyllis Theroux

WE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER OUR DECEASED REOKC MEMBERS:

Narciso Aguda—Auditor-Controller
Henry Alvidres—Sheriff
Lydia Anderson—Human Services
Donovan Boren—Fire
Charles Call—Roads
Larkie Cook—KMC
Robert Finch—Assessor
Gerald Greene—Probation
Danial Harder—KMC
Gerald Hirsch—Public Defender
Ralph Howard—Fire
Gloria Joe—Library
Everett Julkowski—Airports-Enterprise
H. Knight—Building Inspection
Donald Mason—Mental Health
Herman Metcalf—KMC
Gladyst Pennington—Roads
Olive Siler—Assessor
Ruth Tolf—KMC

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**March/April 2008
Time Dated Material**

**Official Newsletter of
The Retired Employees of Kern County Inc.**

March Luncheon Reservation

March 11, 2008 at 11:30 a.m., Veterans' Hall, **400 NORRIS ROAD.** If you wish, you may use this form to order tickets for this luncheon. Please send your check, made payable to **REOKC**, together with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Doris Smith, 2500 Drake, Bakersfield, CA 93301. Deadline for reservations is the Wednesday prior to the luncheon (03/05/2008). Phone reservations are not accepted. You may cancel your reservations by calling Doris at 321-9344 prior to the deadline. Cancellations after the deadline cannot be refunded.

Member's name (\$5.00)_____ Spouse (\$5.00)_____

Guest (\$7.00)_____ Total tickets_____ Amount enclosed \$ _____

April Luncheon Reservation

April 8, 2008 at 11:30 a.m., Veterans' Hall, **400 NORRIS ROAD.** If you wish, you may use this form to order tickets for this luncheon. Please send your check, made payable to **REOKC**, together with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Doris Smith, 2500 Drake, Bakersfield, CA 93301. Deadline for reservations is the Wednesday prior to the luncheon (04/02/2008). Phone reservations are not accepted. You may cancel your reservations by calling Doris at 321-9344 prior to the deadline. Cancellations after the deadline cannot be refunded.

Member's name (\$5.00)_____ Spouse(\$5.00)_____

Guest (\$7.00)_____ Total tickets_____ Amount enclosed \$ _____