



## RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION Chico Chapter 077

### FEBRUARY 2021 NEWSLETTER

**Mission Statement:**

*We are active and retired California public employees working together to maintain and improve the quality of the lives of our members by protecting and improving our earned retirement, medical, and other benefits.  
RPEA represents the rank and file retired public employees.*

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### JOIN YOUR CHAPTER 077 MEMBERS FOR A ZOOM MEMBERSHIP MEETING!



**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2021 – 11:30 A.M.**

**SPEAKERS:** Ann Nikolai and Janet Rechtman

**TOPIC:** *Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)  
Enrollment Process/Schedule/Classes*

**Ann Nikolai** is the Program Director for Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), CSU, Chico, and has dedicated more than 25 years to promoting educational opportunities to non-traditional populations. She earned her Master in Public Administration at San Francisco State University in 2003 and attended the Institute of Educational Management at Harvard University in 2001. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology/African American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania.

**Janet Rechtman** recently retired from the University of Georgia where she co-led the nonprofit leadership development practice at the J. W. Fanning Institute of Leadership Development. With more than 40 years' experience as a volunteer leader and consultant to nonprofit organizations, she provided individual coaching and leadership development, as well as technical assistance to nonprofits in areas of strategic planning, evaluation, marketing and communications. Janet moved to Chico in late 2018 to be close to family. This class continues her lifelong exploration of the lived experience of leaders whose practice connects them to communities, nonprofits, and social justice.

**How to join the virtual meeting by Computer or phone:**

**Date:** February 4 - **Time:** 11:30 AM Pacific

**Option 1:** Connect online – [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us)

Click on "Join a Meeting" in the upper right

Enter ID: 595 195 8383 (This is a new meeting ID)

Passcode: 990733

**Option 2:**

Phone, dial +1 669 900 6833

Enter Meeting ID: 595 195 8383

Then just wait to be connected!

**Being on a tablet or computer is better than a phone because you can see the presentation and people's faces.**

**ZOOM ID CHANGE**

Last month the Zoom ID link changed after the January newsletter was printed. Unfortunately, those members who don't have email addresses didn't receive the new link via email prior to the January 7 membership meeting. Apologies to those members who attempted to join the meeting and received an error message!

**COVID-19 VACCINE INFORMATION**

You can receive COVID-19 vaccine information for Butte County and a link for registering to be notified about the vaccine on the following website:

[buttecounty.net/ph/COVID19/vaccine](http://buttecounty.net/ph/COVID19/vaccine)

Click on "Individual Vaccine Form" to get registered.

**MESSAGE FROM ROGER KLAVES  
ASSISTANT AREA II DIRECTOR**

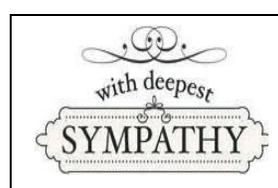
Welcome to 2021! For what it's worth, we got through 2020. Hope is that we made it with minimal impact from Covid. Not much to talk about at this time. Stay safe!

*Roger*

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF SANDY THOMAS**



We are saddened that one of our long-time dedicated Chapter 077 members, Sandy Thomas, passed away on November 7, 2020 while residing at Prestige Assisted Living. Sandy served as our Treasurer for 20 years, and she chaired the RPEA Minutes Review Committee at the General Assemblies from 2006-2016. Sandy will be dearly missed, and our heartfelt sympathy is with her family.



## LEGISLATIVE REPORT – By Mary Kowta

Today, as I am about to write news about our lawmakers in Sacramento, I must acknowledge that there is a lingering cloud of uneasiness and even dread, caused by the insurrection in our nation's Capitol on January 6. We are told that 20,000 National Guard troops are in place to ensure the safety of those present at the Inauguration of President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris on the 20th. Moments ago, there was news that a person was arrested near the Capitol with a fake Inauguration pass and 500 rounds of ammo. Most of our citizens want a peaceful transition of power; it is my intense hope and prayer. Meanwhile, our State Capitol is blocked off and has 1000 National Guard troops on duty to keep the peace, lest troublemakers and insurrectionists arrive there to cause mayhem.

The California legislators returned to work on Jan 11 and Governor Newsom urged them to act quickly on authorization of billions of new spending to help Californians in dire circumstances because of the Coronavirus. The actual 2021 budget goes into effect on July 1, but the Governor wants the lawmakers to consider his plans for use of higher-than-expected revenue to give aid when it is most needed: 2 billion to enable safe school reopening and 2.4 billion to help low income Californians. Where did all this money come from? The wealthiest Californians have not suffered financially from the COVID virus, and their taxes have been flowing into the State's coffers at a hefty rate! The Governor also proposes to help small business and extend the eviction moratorium. Those who collect unemployment have already been allocated an additional \$300 per week. Members of the legislature are meeting to negotiate and designate funds. Senator Jim Nielsen of Tehama, vice chair of the Budget and Fiscal Review Committee, urges prioritizing those most harmed by the pandemic: children (lacking school, with little school support at home), the unemployed, and mom and pop shops. (Sac Bee 1/13).

One can only hope that the Governor's plan for the schools can work; apparently it may be impeded by collective bargaining agreements and the leader of the California Teachers Association, according to Marcus Breton (Sac Bee 1/15).

### CalPERS News:

A decision by the appellate court protects the privacy of disability pensions. An organization, Transparent California, sued to make the information public, but for now, it will remain private as medical information. Several employee unions joined with CalPERS defense in the lawsuit.

Chico City Council is studying pension debt options. The city's CalPERS debt is now \$146 million. Scott Dowell, Administrative Services Director, presented some possible moves, such as requesting shorter amortization, using cash reserves to make additional payments, restructuring the debt at a lower rate. That is done with a Pension Obligation Bond. Dowell seemed to suggest the bond as the last best option. There will be more discussion in February.

Hopefully, when you receive this you will be registered to get the vaccine when it is available for our age group. Our members at Sycamore Glen have received the vaccine, and one person said it was quick and painless!

## HEALTH BENEFITS REPORT – By AI Raitt

### Perturbation, the ER and the Tortoise

Given that the legislature and CalPERS remain relatively inactive these days when it comes to health benefits as they relate to retirees, this offers another moment to reflect on other issues. I don't know about you, but I have been experiencing a notably greater amount of perturbation in the last several weeks. You know, perturbed...about a lot of things! As I contemplate this experience, I've been searching for a foundational concept which can explain at least some, if not all, of it. It occurred to me recently that much of this could be related to having "an ER perspective during a pandemic." By "ER" I mean "Emergency Room." Many of us are used to believing that if we have a major accident or illness, and if a higher level of care is needed but not available elsewhere, we can "always go to the emergency room." It's something we've come to rely on! To depend on! Always there! This availability is similar to the notions we have about public safety services such as fire and police departments and ambulances. If the need is critical and severe, they will come. We don't typically stop and take time to reflect on what it would be like to lose these services. They're just there as a "given." In the parable of the Tortoise and the Hare, this is the equivalent of the Hare: Fast...Quickly responsive...Sure to win... Etc., except now the "given" is "gone." There's a sense of loss...Time to grieve. It feels a bit uneasy!

A community public health service has the potential to respond in a similar way depending on the particular crisis and the resources available. And therein lies the rub when it comes to our current pandemic. It's clearly a crisis; however, the public health resources, at many levels, have been inadequate for some time. This is the result of two major problems: Funding at the federal and state levels has been steadily decreasing over the past two to three decades. When legislators have to make decisions about where funding will be decreased to make up for shortfalls, public health programs are often a target. They limp along from year to year trying to provide preventative services which will help keep the general population from contracting various communicable diseases. However, when a pandemic occurs they are far from able to rapidly respond.

In addition to the funding issues there has been this time around a profound lack of coordination and leadership from the highest levels of the federal government for developing testing capabilities as well as distributing and administering the vaccine. This has impacted all states which have, in turn, developed their own strategies which counties have also done. It's quite perturbing!

This will eventually work itself out when we reach the state of "herd immunity." In the meantime, I'm encouraging that we consciously give up the "ER" concept as it applies to this pandemic and, instead, adopt the "Tortoise" approach. I haven't heard anything about whether or not the appropriate federal agency will start naming pandemics like they do for hurricanes. Maybe since the last pandemic was 102 years ago has something to do with it; but if they ask for names, I'm suggesting "Shell-be."