



RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION Chico Chapter 077

JUNE 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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STATUS OF FUTURE CHAPTER 077 MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Our last Chapter 077 Zoom membership meeting was held on May 6, and we enjoyed an excellent presentation about the history and restoration of the Bethel AME Church. We're disappointed that there will be no June picnic again this year; and, as usual, meetings will not be held in July and August. The Board will continue to meet during the summer, and you will continue to receive newsletters so that you will keep updated on RPEA news and information about future chapter membership meetings.

We're excited that we can finally begin holding in-person membership meetings again in September at Manzanita Place (Chico Elks Lodge). Because of COVID-19 restrictions, our meals will be served individually in lieu of our usual buffet lunches. Our Chapter 077 will pay for the first in-person meeting lunch on September 2, and we hope that all of you will plan to join us. We've missed seeing our members in person during the pandemic, and it was nice seeing the members on our computer screens who Zoomed with us this past year.

As a reminder, our rpeachapter77.com website contains information about our upcoming meetings and includes the newsletters and minutes from the board and membership meetings. We encourage you to check out the website regularly to stay updated on our chapter news.

We hope that all of you have been vaccinated and are staying healthy and safe during the pandemic. This has been a difficult time for everyone, and we're ready to start adding some normalcy to our lives and enjoying in-person visits with our family and friends!

MESSAGE FROM ROGER KLAVES Area II Director (*Email written April 25, 2021*)

Howdy displaced Paradise 074 Lunch-Bunchers! You'll see some additional addresses on this email. That's because I'm including addresses of northstate chapters because I've been elected to the vaunted position of Area Director for Area II. This will last until the General Assembly meeting in September of 2022. Those who wish to supersede me at that time are invited to line up at the door! Our Paradise chapter is still suspended at this time. Rebuilding continues in Paradise. I see no timeline for when our chapter will have a place to meet. However, you can look into the Chico chapter meetings held on the first Thursday of each month except July and August. I can send a link to anyone interested in a Zoom attendance. Chico hopes to reconvene in-person meetings in September. Any RPEA member in the area is invited to sit in those meetings as well.

CalPERS is still in the process of hiring a new Chief Investment Officer. However, the investment fund is in pretty good shape due to the stock market continuing to go up and up. An item found in a 2019 audit showed that PERS spent more monies than allowed at out-of-town board meetings in 2016 and 2017. This information was obtained by RPEA board member J.J. Jelincic. PERS is working toward rectifying these practices. The *Sacramento Bee* reported on April 19 of this year that a 25-year employee of PERS apparently took advantage of several "dormant" accounts which resulted in ripping off PERS to the tune of 685 thousand dollars. Civil and criminal charges are pending. BTW, the fund now stands at about 459 Billion dollars.

Be sure to read the latest State newsletter that arrived in the mail a couple days ago. In it was a very nice tribute to RPEA's late Harvey Robinson, written by Vice President Al Darby. Harvey was recently "called home" because of medical issues and Covid.

SB 278, which might make employers responsible for errors in monetary retirement benefits, is currently in the California Senate suspense file. (Note page 5 in the latest State newsletter.)

Roger

HEALTH BENEFITS REPORT – By Al Raitt

During the May 13, 2021 Stakeholders virtual meeting emanating from the CalPERS office in Sacramento, Dr. Julia Logan presented a monthly COVID-19 update, and the news was mostly positive. Nationally, the number of new cases reported each month has decreased over the past two months and has reached the lowest number since September, 2020. There has also been a decrease in the number of hospitalizations. There has been a 94% drop in cases of those who are 65 and older and fully vaccinated. There are currently several “hot spots” in the U.S. including areas in New Mexico and Colorado. In California approximately 50% of the State’s population has been fully vaccinated. Approximately 2.2 million doses of vaccine are being administered in the U.S. each day although that number may be starting to decrease because of those who are “vaccine hesitant.”

The pattern of viral spread world-wide can still impact what happens in the U.S. For example, preliminary data indicates that current vaccines are effective for known variants (although there may be a slight increase in the number of “mild” cases); however, there are some variants about which the CDC knows very little with regards to how easily they spread and how effective the current vaccines will eventually be. This will be another of those “continue to monitor and wait to see what happens” situations. The World Health Organization estimates that with the precautions some countries have taken, along with the vaccination program, between one and two billion lives have already been saved.

Nationally there has been a shift from mass vaccination sites to targeted administration in places such as medical offices and pharmacies. Many health plans are doing outreach to their policy holders and offering information to those who remain hesitant about receiving the vaccine.

Given the efficacy and safety demonstrated in trial studies for 12-15 year-olds, the CDC has given Pfizer emergency approval for vaccination administration in that age group. This should help to increase the degree of immunity in the U.S. population as a whole. Even for those in this age group who test positive, but are asymptomatic, there appears to be a relatively low rate of viral transmission or spread to others. In the U.S. thus far, about half a million cases in this age group have been documented; and of these, approximately 300 thousand were hospitalized.

With the advent of schools reopening, and with athletic competition intensifying, there will be an increased importance of vaccination to keep the number of cases as low as possible. Appointments for vaccinations can now be made anywhere in California through the website <https://myturn.ca.gov>.

Also, vaccine sites in Butte County can be found at: <http://www.buttecounty.net>. Pfizer has now applied for “full” (as contrasted to the current “emergency”) approval of its vaccine. This process usually takes 2-3 months.

With the new CDC recommendations regarding less use of the masks, we are entering “the land of many questions.” An approach of benefit to many is: Gather as much information as you can. Use your best judgment. Be as concerned for others as you are for yourself. Be patient. Be kind. Be safe and be well. *Al*

LEGISLATIVE REPORT – By Mary Kowta

The Recall Looms Closer!

Governor Newsom is fairly well-positioned to survive the recall effort. He released his proposed budget on May 13. The budget is based on a \$76 Billion surplus (from taxes) and \$27 Billion in Federal pandemic aid. This puts the Governor in a unique situation to propose spending on the health and welfare of Californians, to offer free kindergarten to four year olds, as well as many school improvements, and to promote high-speed rail and other infrastructure projects. He also hopes to provide tax rebates to many, as well as a stimulus check for low and middle income families. Of course, our lawmakers have their own visions of how to spend the largesse.

Meanwhile, recall hopefuls Cox (“bearly” in the race, traveling the State with his “beast”, poor animal) and Falconer, who suggests he would abolish State taxes for low income Californians, are trying to excite the electorate.

Journalist Joe Mathews (*SF Chronicle* 5/16) makes the novel suggestion that Gray Davis, who lost his own recall election, should get on the ballot so that any disgruntled “anybody else” Democrats could vote for Gray instead of a Republican. Somehow, it would seem that Gray Davis would not choose to go down in history as a candidate who lost twice!

Open Door to Corruption at CalPERS??

As of May 14, Assembly Bill 386, which permits CalPERS investments to make direct loans to entities without public scrutiny, appears to be moving forward without critical examination by the legislators. What are they thinking? This bill is now headed for its third reading.

Drought....Wildfire.....again!

It appears that we will soon be asked to conserve water. This may well be a summer of 5-minute showers and other conservation restrictions. Be careful, stay safe, and enjoy maskless meetings with vaccinated family and friends!
Mary