



**RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
Chico Chapter 077**

NOVEMBER 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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**IMPORTANT MEETING
UPDATE!**

NO NOVEMBER 4 MEETING

There will be no Chapter 077 membership meeting on November 4. This decision was made after reviewing the CDC guidelines and how they apply specifically to our General Membership luncheon meetings. In-person membership meetings will be discontinued until further notice out of an abundance of caution and concern for all chapter members regarding their health and safety. As the Board continues to monitor the evolving CDC recommendations, this will be done with the hope that we will be able to return to face-to-face meetings at the earliest time possible. Please watch for updates in future newsletters and also the rpeachapter77.com website!

MESSAGE FROM ROGER KLAVES

Area II Director (Email written October 1, 2021)

Greetings to displaced Paradise Chapter 074 members and other possibly interested parties!

Paradise continues to rebuild slowly but steady. If you're hankering to return to the ice skating days of your youth, the town will again have the fall/winter ice rink up and running. However, there is still not an adequate place to meet for RPEA meetings in town. Having attended RPEA's recent quarterly Board meeting via Zoom, I can note a few things: The State Legislature is now in recess until January 3, 2022. About 1800 people a month check in with RPEA's website every month. If you haven't, you might give it a try. Radtana Lee, our Headquarters office manager has left. Corey Saeteurn, our IT guy, is now our office manager. He will be great! SB386 that RPEA helped defeat, will probably return for another try next year as it's a 2-year bill. That's the one regarding PERS wanting to make investments without much, if any, oversight and other things. Retirees can work up to 960 hours a year as you know. If accidentally working more than that, SB411 puts the onus on the employer to make it right, and the retiree isn't required to pay back the overage. (We'll see how that works out!) Each chapter is encouraged to resume chapter meetings, if possible, and it's up to the

chapters as to how they want to do it given the Covid-19 situation. I know of one chapter that took temperatures of participants as they entered their meeting venue. Chapters generally have increased their treasuries during the pandemic. Headquarters strongly suggests that chapters spend some of this money on chapter-related activities such as public relations. Lastly, it appears that CalPERS needs to do a better job in recovering monies from estates of dead annuitants. About 1800 PERS beneficiaries die each month; and in many cases, PERS doesn't know of their passing until months after. To recover millions of dollars, PERS says they will "incorporate new procedures to increase recovery opportunities." *Roger*

LEGISLATIVE REPORT – By Mary Kowta

Governor Newsom has signed 770 bills to close out the lawmakers' 2021 session. He has also vetoed 66 bills. Many of these bills we have mentioned earlier, and many have been analyzed in the press. There are a number of measures that concern higher education and the effort to coordinate public high school, community college, the CSU system, and the UC system. The State first attempted this in 1960, without success. It will be interesting to see if the renewed effort can benefit those young citizens who seek higher education and all it entails in any kind of seamless manner.

Here are a few bills that may affect some of us. Going fishing? You better get your license! But, of course, you know that. Maybe you purchased your license in June, and it will expire Dec. 31. This coming year, you can purchase it in June, and it will be good for a full year! Yep, you will now be able to harass those fish for 365 days no matter when you buy the license.

Another bill that was signed with no objection pertains to "ghost" guns. These objects are made from gun parts and are as lethal as actual guns, yet they cannot be traced in any way. Justice and law enforcement and the NRA all supported this bill which will enable apprehension of those who threaten others with these objects.

Two vetoed bills may save lives. One would have decriminalized jaywalking. I thought "Oh, a warning would be enough," but now I see that a ticket might deter me and
(Continued on back)

LEGISLATIVE REPORT (Continued)

others from taking that shortcut that leads to disaster! A lawmaker had written a bill that would allow cyclists to treat stop signs as "yield" signs. This is a frequent sight here in Chico. The Governor undoubtedly knows of the tragedy that this practice has caused. It is better for the cyclist and for the drivers who share the roads.

A bill that phases out use of gas-powered small engines such as lawnmowers and leaf blowers makes good sense. These tools endanger the lives of the users who spend large parts of their days breathing toxic fumes. The lawmaker who wrote the bill states that one hour of small engine use creates more pollution than driving a gas-powered car from LA to Denver! Another reason to ditch the grass and create a yard of native plants that only need a bit of clipping!

Other news:

The recent CalPERS election resulted in defeat of incumbent Marjorie Brown and Tiffany Emon Moran. Both had support of RPEA and CSU retirement organization. Brown had been a pro-transparency and accountability voice on the Board. A distressing note is that many RPEA members did not vote. Possibly, leadership did not engage with members about the importance of these Board positions.

CalPERS has announced the new Global Equity Managing Investment Director, Simiso Nzima, who has served 16 years on the investment team.

Hoping for the day when we can meet together! In the meantime, stay safe, stay healthy, and enjoy a few Halloween treats! *Mary*

HEALTH BENEFITS REPORT – By Al Raitt

This may well be the last article that I write for a while for the newsletter. I wrote my first "Health Benefits" article starting with the April, 2014 edition, and have been doing so monthly for 7½ years, and the time seems right to take a break. Maybe it's part of a "seven year itch" phenomenon!

However, there is also a very personal and, for me, disheartening experience that's undoubtedly related. I have a nephew who is in his 22nd day of hospitalization for COVID-19. He's near his mid-30's and has a wife and two young children. He has been active, physically strong, an Eagle Scout, a hard worker, and a devoted husband and father.

However, as helpful and involved as he's been with his immediate and extended family, one thing which he would absolutely not do is get vaccinated. He was staunchly opposed even though several members of the family pleaded many times with him to do this, if not for himself, then for the sake of his own wife and children, but he still refused.

He was sick for five days before being taken to the hospital. The illness had progressed to the point that he was no longer eligible for the monoclonal antibodies. He was started on the usual COVID-19 treatment protocols, but he just kept getting sicker. The staff would turn him over on his front side to help with breathing, but each morning he would spike a temperature of 105 degrees, and staff would work all day with success to bring down the temperature only to have the pattern recycle the next day. They kept increasing the size of the tubes bringing more oxygen for him to breath, but even doing that didn't work, and eleven days ago he was placed on a ventilator. That brought only partial relief, so he was placed on the transport list to be transferred to a facility that had an ECMO (Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation machine - - much like a heart-lung machine) but he improved enough on his own that he was removed from the list.

But, as can happen with COVID patients, a few days later a lung collapsed, and a tube had to be inserted to reinflate that lung. Not too long after that the lung on the other side collapsed, so a tube had to be inserted on that side. A few days after that he required an emergency tracheotomy, and as of this writing (October 15, 2021) is still on the ventilator.

At this point, I'm feeling heart-broken. Even though several in my family have encouraged me to "just let it go" and to "Remember, he's an adult and can make his own decisions," I still have images of him as a little boy, running around, being happy, and I'm finding those images hard to shake, and I'm also finding it harder to write a "Health Benefits" article when even those I care deeply about won't do something that would have given them the "Benefits of Health."

I'm purposely not writing this as a "pro-vaccine" or an "anti-vaccine" article. I believe everyone has the right to make their own decision. I'm just writing about the facts of an actual event that's impacted me personally; and at the moment, that's about all I can do. Please remember to read the "Health Benefits Update" that appears in the statewide RPEA bimonthly newsletter. Thank you for the privilege of writing these local chapter articles to you for so many years!

Al