



The Informer

RETIRED EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION OF ORANGE COUNTY, INC.

REAO's Luncheon for May 27 in Fountain Valley and June 16 in Hemet have been cancelled

In light of the unknown facts and drivers surrounding the Coronavirus, REAO strongly believes caution is of utmost importance when it comes to the health of our membership. This is a challenging time for us all. Being mindful of recommendations by health experts and mandates by State and local governments to avoid crowds, the REAO Board of Directors unanimously agreed that cancelling the upcoming luncheons is the appropriate action to take at this time. We will continue to update our website, www.reaoc.org, with information as changes develop.

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Progressive Drawing

\$400.00

Due to the cancellation of both the March and May luncheons, the Progressive Drawing will be \$400 for the September luncheon. You must be present at the time of the drawing to win! See you on Wednesday, September 23, 2020 at Mile Square Park.

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Presidents' Message

From the Desks of Linda Robinson and Doug Storm



Summer months are rapidly approaching. Imprinted on our memories are Memorial Day weekends and Fourth of July celebrations—holidays which are part of our personal histories. It's generally a time for family and friends to come together to enjoy BBQ's, parades and one another's company. It's a time for travel and relaxing moments. Fast forward to Summer 2020. This season may turn out to have a very different experience and meaning for each of us.

As retirees we are a durable and resilient group. We powered through the first months of 2020 contending with an unwanted and deadly, novel Coronavirus. The virus has upended our country's health, both physically and economically. It's taken a toll on emotions. Despite the horrendous downside of this invader, the upside includes numerous acts of kindness, heroism and consideration for others by individuals and groups across our states, country and world. This is a fact—together, with unity and determination we can successfully overcome this pandemic scourge. Getting to the best outcome will take time, effort and inconvenience. We will prevail because we are strong-willed, tenacious and resolved to subdue

this adversary.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

During this atypical challenge, your REAO and AREOC Boards continue to work on your behalf. As a security measure your Board of Directors, early on, made the decision to cancel REAO luncheons in Fountain Valley and Hemet during the months of March, April, May and June. Luncheon activities will resume in the fall depending on pandemic status and curtailment. You can expect to receive *The Informer* as usual and view the REAO website at www.reaoc.org that is updated regularly with current news and announcements. REAO monthly Board meetings will be held via telecommunications and the Board Watch Committee will maintain the monitoring of Board of Supervisor meetings. Our world today is not business as usual; however, we will find ways to address ever-emerging retiree-related issues. Your safety and retirement security are our priorities.

MEDICAL PLAN COVERAGE

The 2020 Retiree Medical Rate process is underway. REAO Board members and volunteers met with County staff and contract consultants in March. Rate increase numbers for

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UCI Annual Health Care Forecast Conference

REAOC

Annually UCI hosts a conference on the future of health care both nationally and internationally. This year 25 experts were brought together to present on "Health Policies in a Presidential Election Year." The conference was held on the 20th and 21st of this past February prior to the Coronavirus pandemic. As can be seen from below, much of the information discussed and some of the predictions have come true and others missed the target. Still it is an interesting prelude to the serious health care situation in which we now find ourselves.

Forecasts-US Economy, Federal Health Care Budget, Medicare and Medicaid

Health care financing is on every voters list of the three top issues. The annual spending is estimated to be three trillion dollars. Every big company is looking for "a piece of the action." At the time of the conference the economy was doing very well with the stock market at all-time highs, unemployment at record lows and jobs available to all who wanted one. Needless to say, things have taken a turn for the worse. Several speakers' optimistic outlooks have not come true on many fronts.

Outlook on Drug Pricing

One of the issues carried over from the previous conference is calculating the cost of a drug versus its clinical result. Fair price for a fair value was a theme taken up by several participants. The way drugs are priced is often due to other factors than the drug's actual cost. We need a blue print to lower drug prices. The White House is trying to shift the responsibility to Congress.

Politics and Health Care Policy

Even with bipartisan support the Congress and the President have done nothing to deal with drug costs. It was expected that little would be done during an election year. Each political party has a different goal for the year ahead and little appetite for digging into a thorny issue. The result is the States are needing to pick up the slack. There are numerous Bills passed by the House sitting in the Senate without any action. The President is emboldened by the lack of any strong potential opponents for the November election. It was said that the President is claiming more power than he actually has. A number of scenarios were presented from a Trump win with a status quo to a Democratic sweep which will stymie

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The Informer is published 5 times a year. Readers are encouraged to write *The Informer* expressing their views and comments on the subjects of interest to them.

The mission of REAOC is to promote and maintain fellowship and camaraderie of OCERS retirees and their spouses by sponsoring social and recreational activities and by maintaining contacts via the newsletter, the REAOC website, e-mail, or other means of communication. A secondary purpose is tracking and dissemination of information relating to pension and legislative actions, financial matters, physical and mental health care, volunteer and employment opportunities and other concerns that may be of interest to our members.

OCERS retirees and their spouses are eligible for regular association membership. Dues are \$3.00 per month, payable through payroll deduction. Active employees, who will receive their retirement through OCERS, are eligible for Associate Membership. Dues for associate members are \$1.00 per month payable for the year each January.

Luncheons are held at Mile Square Golf Course in Fountain Valley on the fourth Wednesday of January, March, May and September, and on the first Wednesday of December. A local chapter of REAOC is active in Hemet.



Health Care Forecast

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anything the President wants to do. It was stated that we cannot have a stable health care system with all of the current political turmoil. (All of this and the Coronavirus too.)

Outlook on States Health Care and California

Mental Health care is a number one issue for the States' Governors. The costs of care have been increasing by 8% over the past few years. Emergency Room visits are the wrong place for this care. The poor are twice as likely to seek ER treatment as nonpoor. This usage is also at a time when the number of professionals is shrinking. California has about 80% of the needed MDs. We do not have enough now, and we will not have enough in the future. This is also true of hospital beds. Ideally, we should have 50 beds per 100,000 people. We have about 15% of what is needed and this is pre-COVID-19 outbreak!

Digital Transformation in Health Care

It is important to understand how the market place is changing through the application of new technology. Broad technical data is now available as never before. Trends are moving faster than we think. In turn organizations that have their finger on the pulse of society will reap the rewards. This increase in data is changing the competitive landscape. The next big Health Care issue will be with artificial intelligence (AI). It can assist with attacking chronic disease and augmenting algorithms on line. They will be focusing on health care rather than sick care. In the very near future, it is proposed that more stock transactions will be made by AI than by humans. The United States is the

Presidents' Message

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all plans will not be available until May; however, the County reviewed the experience data for the 12 months of 2019 in the County-sponsored PPO Wellwise and Sharewell Plans. A notable increase in both service and prescription usage was reported. If usage in these plans continues to increase at the current rate, another hefty increase in those plan rates may occur for 2021 coverage. REAOC will continue to monitor the statistics for accuracy, trend and plan design.

CLASS ACTION LAWSUIT UPDATE

As reported in previous newsletters the most current action taken by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals occurred in September 2018. At that time the Court ruled in a published opinion retirees covered by the lawsuit adequately claimed they had an "implied contract" with the County providing them the right to a monthly Grant for health care costs during their lifetime. The claim alleges the County of Orange wrongly reduced a Retiree Medical Grant benefit that is based on retirees' vested contract rights. As employees, from 1993 to 2007, retirees paid 1% of their salary for the Grant benefit specifically identified in Memorandums of Understanding. The case was remanded back to the District Court for further action. A "summary judgment" hear-

only country without a "single identifier". Every place you go you have to repeat the same information. Insurance plans do not share information. A Single identifier is needed to reduce errors, increase treatment accuracy and organize the increase in technical data we are about to experience.

– by *Michael Schumacher, PhD*

ing was held November 1, 2019. Prior to that hearing the judge issued a preliminary ruling siding with the County. However, after hearing arguments by Attorney Michael Brown the judge declined to make the ruling permanent and took the arguments "under consideration". Given the judge's past actions it came as no surprise that on November 13th he, again, ruled for the County. On March 5, 2020 Attorney Brown filed an Appeal with the Ninth Circuit requesting the Court reverse the District Court's grant of summary judgment and requested remand for trial based on the merits of the case. An amicus brief was filed in support of the Appeal by CRCEA, the state-wide retirement association to which REAOC is a member. More to follow as information becomes available.

COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT

As approved in early February by the OCERS Retirement Board, a 3% COLA adjustment will be included in monthly allowances beginning May 1st. The Supplemental Targeted Adjustment for Retirees (STAR) COLA was also approved. This COLA affects only those who retired in early 1986 or prior to that date.

In closing, and on behalf of the entire REAOC and AREOC Board of Directors, thank you for your continued support and membership. Thank you for your patience. Be well, retirees! Now is the time to take extra precautions to maintain your health and to protect the health of others, the best you can. Please stay involved, united and informed.

– Linda Robinson and Doug Storm

People at Risk for Serious Illness from COVID-19 – Who is at Higher Risk?

Early information shows that some people are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. This includes:

- Older adults
- People who have serious chronic medical conditions like:
 - ▲ Heart disease
 - ▲ Diabetes
 - ▲ Lung disease

If a COVID-19 outbreak happens in your community, it could last for a long time. Depending on how severe the outbreak is, public health officials may recommend community actions to reduce people's risk of being exposed to COVID-19. These actions can slow the spread and reduce the impact of disease. If you are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 because of your age or because you have a serious long-term health problem, it is extra important for you to take actions to reduce your risk of getting sick with the disease.

COVID-19: What Older Adults Need to Know

Jay Butler, Deputy Director for Infectious Diseases at CDC, describes preventative measures to help protect older adults from COVID-19.

Have supplies on hand

- Contact your healthcare provider to ask about obtaining extra necessary medications to have on hand in case there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in your community and you need to stay home for a prolonged period of time.
- If you cannot get extra medications, consider using mail-order for medications.
- Be sure you have over-the-counter medicines and medical supplies (tissues, etc.) to treat fever and other symptoms. Most people will be able

to recover from COVID-19 at home.

- Have enough household items and groceries on hand so that you will be prepared to stay at home for a period of time.

Take everyday precautions

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Take everyday preventive actions.
 - ▲ Clean your hands often.
 - ▲ Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, or having been in a public place.
 - ▲ If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
 - ▲ Wash your hands after touching surfaces in public places.
 - ▲ Avoid touching your face, nose, eyes, etc.
 - ▲ Clean and disinfect your home to remove germs: practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (for example: tables, door-knobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, keyboards, sinks & cell phones).

If COVID-19 is spreading in your community

Take extra measures to put distance between yourself and other people to further reduce your risk of being exposed to this new virus.

- Stay home as much as possible.
- Consider ways of getting food brought to your house through family, social, or commercial networks.

These may include:

- ▲ Meals on Wheels
- ▲ Senior Centers

Have a plan for if you get sick

- Consult with your health care provider for more information about monitoring your health for symp-

oms suggestive of COVID-19.

- Stay in touch with others by phone or email. You may need to ask for help from friends, family, neighbors, community health workers, etc. if you become sick.
- Determine who can provide you with care if your caregiver gets sick.

Watch for symptoms and emergency warning signs

- If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 call your doctor or get medical attention immediately. In adults, emergency warning signs*:
 - ▲ Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
 - ▲ Fever and cough
 - ▲ Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
 - ▲ New confusion or inability to arouse
 - ▲ Bluish lips or face

*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

What to Do if You Get Sick

- Stay home and call your healthcare provider and let them know about your symptoms. Tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help them take care of you and keep other people from getting infected or exposed.
- If you are not sick enough to be hospitalized, you can recover at home. Follow CDC instructions for how to take care of yourself at home.
- Know when to get emergency help.
- Get medical attention immediately if you have any of the emergency warning signs listed above.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html#who-ishigher-risk>

In Memoriam

We extend our deepest sympathy to the families and loved ones of those who meant so much to so many.

January 2020 – March 2020

John Ackerman, Assessor
Catherine Balsinger, Superior Court
Gary Bearden, OCTA
Diane Berwanger, HCA
Elsie Black, HCA
Vicki Boccumini, Probation
Helen Bogue, Assessor
Amada Bonilla Gonzales, HCA
George Caravalho, OCPW
Esther Churchill, SSA
Terrance Collier, HCA
Suzanne Di Luzio, Superior Court
Cesar Diaz, OCPW
Lorraine Diersing, OCFA
Roxanne Drake, Superior Court
Christa-Monika Early, Sheriff's
Lucy Ely, Assessor
Marilyn Farnsworth, Sanitation Dept.
Andree Finn, SSA
Patty Fleming, HCA
Carol Floyd, SSA
Mary Freeman, Superior
Timothy Gannon, HCA
Mary Gibson, SSA
Joyce Gillette, HCA
Vijaya Gorthi, OCWR
Phyllis Hamilton, Probation
Andrea Harris, Sheriff's
John Henry, OCFA
Frank Hicks, OCPW
Mary Hooven, SSA
Tiffany Huynh, HCA
Ruth Karp, OCPW
Jerry Krans, Sheriff's
Jane Magsam, SSA
Claudia Martin, Sheriff's
David Maze, Sheriff's
Charles Mitchell, OCPW
Harold Munroe, OCPW
Carolyn Nadolski, Auditor
Donald Neureither, DA
Gladys Nwufo, HCA
Joyce Oliver-Abad, OCPW

ORANGE COUNTY PARK RANGERS CELEBRATE THEIR 50TH YEAR OF PUBLIC SERVICE!

50 years ago, the first Orange County parks employee was awarded the then new title of "Park Ranger."

Previously the title was "park foreman" an employee who was responsible for all aspects of park operations from maintenance, repairs and reservations. This was a time of rotary telephone and when there were only two parks in Orange County, Irvine Regional (Orange County's first park) and O'Neil Regional Park (Orange County's first camping park) and the Newport Beach Harbor facilities. With the change of title came an increase in responsibilities and duties.

The County's first Park Ranger, I am happy to announce, is still alive

and living in Orange County. His name is Mike (Mikko) Curran, an authentic Irishman who successfully immigrated to Orange County many, many, years ago.

His first assignment was to go down to a clothing retail store in the City of Orange and choose his own Park Ranger uniform.

The oldest Orange County Park Ranger is not Mike but is none other than Richard Dyer, who I am also happy to report, is alive and living in Orange County at the vibrant age of 91 years young.

The retired Park Rangers meet on a monthly basis and share their recollections of those early raucous days of taming the wild weekend and

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Sonja Omsted, SSA
Barbara Pemberton, DA
Khang Pham, SSA
Jean Rheinheimer, DA
Carmen Ruiz, OCPW
Vern Salzbrunn, OCTA
Eduardo Sanchez, OCPW
Harold Schaffroth, Sheriff's
Gloria Shipp, SSA
Joan Stack, HCA
Michael Sullivan, OCPW
Osman Taban, HCA
Stanley Taylor, OCPW
Fay VanKirk, Probation
Christine Vu, HCA
Linda Wallace, Superior
Bernard Way, SSA
Martha Webb, HCA
Rosamond Weisman
Gary Westman, OCPW
Iva Widman
Robert Winters, Probation
Maria Yniguez

Brian Yurick, OCPW
Surviving Spouses
Catherine Conologue
John Dickerson
Jamie Fox
Adele Hendricks
Kathryn Hollon
Viola Majors
James Martinson
Masako Mc Cracken
Joseph Minardi
Kathleen Najmulski
Eldamae Omasta
Mary Perez
Betty Reilly
Dennis Rowe
Vivian Searfass
Doris Simpson
Nancy Smith
Phyllis Socia
Julia Sullivan
Carrie Walters
Hazel Wang

Memorial Day 2020



On May 25, 2020 we will celebrate Memorial Day. This U.S. federal holiday is observed on the last Monday of May to honor the men and women who have died while serving in the military. We also use this occasion to honor and recognize all of our veterans who have served our nation and have contributed to making it the magnificent country that it is. In the past, we have recognized those who served in our Armed Forces at our May luncheon. Although this cannot be done this year due to the cancellation of our May luncheon, we would still like to recognize those who have served.

What's the Difference Between Memorial Day and Veterans Day?

On both Memorial Day and Veterans Day, it's customary to spend time remembering and honoring the countless veterans who have served the United States throughout the country's history. However, there is a distinction between the two holidays:

- Memorial Day commemorates the men and women who died while in the military service of their country, particularly those who died in battle or as a result of wounds sustained in battle. In other words, the purpose of Memorial Day is to memorialize the veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. We spend time remembering those who lost their lives and could not come home, reflecting on their service and why we have the luxury and freedom that we enjoy today.

- Veterans Day is the day set aside to thank and honor ALL who served—in wartime or peacetime—regardless of whether they died or

survived. Veterans Day is always observed officially on November 11, regardless of the day of the week on which it falls.

Why is The Poppy A Symbol of Memorial Day?



In the war-torn battlefields of Europe, the common red field poppy was one of the first plants to reappear. Its seeds scattered in the wind and sat dormant in the ground, only germinating when the ground was disturbed—as it was by the very brutal fighting of World War I.

John McCrae, a Canadian soldier and physician, witnessed the war first hand and was inspired to write the now-famous poem "In Flanders Fields" in 1915. He saw the poppies scattered throughout the battlefield surrounding his artillery position in Belgium. The wearing of the poppy was traditionally done on Memorial Day in the United States, but the symbolism has evolved to encompass all veterans living and deceased, so poppies may be worn on Veterans Day as well. Not long after the custom began, it was adopted by other Allied nations, including Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, where it is still popular today. Today, poppies are not only a symbol of loss of life, but also of recovery and new life, especially in

Welcome, New Members

Auditor Controller: Judith Carrillo

CEO: Karen Ontiveros

Child Support Services: Samuel Chairez

County Counsel: Paula Whaley

District Attorney: Darrel Raney, Tracy Hughes

HCA: Mary Eason, Frank Cabrera, Elizabeth Bausman, Cynthia Estrada, Jagdish Chopra, Dolores Estrada, Susanna Ganey, Celia Anaya-Conboy

OCCR: Reza Zargham

OC Public Works: Elmer Guzman, John Chang, Robert Valle, Yolanda Varquez, Treme Ohanesian, Tony Chacon, John Moore

OC Sanitation District: Dale Henderson, Victor Salinas

OCSD: Timothy Moy, Tamara Jurjis Boothe, Catherine Borchardt, Dionizia Melesko, Donald Petka

OCTA: Eduardo Medina, Rodney Vigil
Probation: Cheri Liu, Sharon Reyburn, Randi Hartzell, Armond Nazaar

Registrar of Voters: Latricia Santos

SSA: Esther Gallardo, David Zietz, Eric Pittman, Norma Castro, Veronique Tran, Lisa Powers, Carmen Rivas, Steve Sakamoto, Donna Jefferson, Estela Anaya-Castanon, Jovie Gonzalez, Noemi Kropp

Superior Court: Vivian Geske, Teresa Decker, Moira Smith, Anna Igarta, Loretta Menchaca Schwary

Treasurer-Tax Collector: Patricia Padilla

Not Stated: Bonnie Frisch, Debbie Gilgren, Vallarice Morgan

support of the servicemen and women who survived the war but suffered from physical and psychological injuries long after it ended.

With deep appreciation and thanks and, on behalf of the REAOC and AREOC Board of Directors and Officers, we salute all of you who have served our country.

OC Meals at Some Senior Centers now ready for Pick Up

The Meals on Wheels OC Lunch Café program for adults age 60-plus, which normally provides a hot lunch in social settings at our local senior and community centers, is now providing grab-and-go frozen meals that can be picked up at the centers. However, City of Irvine, Lakeview Center is “delivery only” at this time.

Registered Lunch Café participants may have a family or friend pick up meals by providing the name and address of the participant. New, unregistered participants may have someone pick up meals as long as that person has the ID for the individual for whom meals are intended. Registration may be completed on-site at your local senior center in real time.

If seniors are current clients of the lunch programs at the senior centers and need their food delivered



to them instead, they can request this through the organizations listed below. Meal recipients are given the opportunity to provide a voluntary contribution for meals, and no one will be turned away due to the inability to contribute.

Due to the impact of COVID-19 these programs may change, please call or check websites provided below daily after 9 a.m. because times and locations may change. Seniors can always call the Office on Aging for further guidance. See

numbers below.

To locate a Senior Center nearest you please check the websites below or call the number provided.

Serving North, West, and Central Orange County cities:

Meals on Wheels • Questions: 714 823-3294 or go to their website: www.mealsonwheelsoc.org

Serving South Orange County cities:

Age Well Senior Services
• Questions: 949 855-8033 or go to their website: <http://www.agewellseniorservices.org/>

Serving City of Irvine: Lakeview

Senior Center – Delivery ONLY – call to enroll • Questions: 949 724-6910 or 949 724-6096 or go to their website: www.cityofirvine.org – search for Senior Services Meals Office on Aging: 1-800-510-2020 or TDD line: 714 550-2020 National Meals on Wheels: 1-800-677-1116

URGENT REQUEST: REAOC NEEDS YOUR HELP

Due to the recent Covid-19 virus that has affected all of us, it is more important than ever that you make sure your personal contact information is up to date. If you have moved, changed mailing addresses, changed your e-mail or have gotten a new phone number, it is vital you update this information so you will continue to receive your benefits, newsletters, e-mails, etc.

If any of the above pertains to you, you need to notify REAOC, the Orange County Employees' Retirement System (OCERS) and the County of Orange Employee Benefits

Center with the new information.

To contact REAOC, call (714) 840-3995 or go to <http://reaoc.org/email-us/> to e-mail the new/changed information.

To contact OCERS, call (714) 558-6200 or go to <https://www.ocers.org> and sign-into “MyOCERS” to update your information. To contact the County of Orange Employee Benefits Center, call (800) 858-7266 or go to <https://countyoforange.ielect.com> to go to the benefits website.



Hold These Dates

The following dates have been reserved for our 2020 luncheons:



FOUNTAIN VALLEY

September 23
December 2

HEMET

October 20
December 15



Orange County Park Rangers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

days of taming the wild weekend and holiday park crowds.

Many are the stories, some shockingly sad, some funny, some well, unbelievable but true.

We look forward to a variety of upcoming festivities, announcements and events by Orange County to recognize and celebrate the services provided over the past 50 years by our men and women who wore the khaki and the green.

As we like to say, "Ranger On!"

Submitted by REAOC retiree:

Tom Maloney

Park Ranger (retired, badge #81)

Dated Material – Please Deliver Immediately

Orange County Park Rangers' 50th Year

Meals at Senior Centers

Memorial Day

CDC Warnings for Older Adults

UCI Annual Health Care Forecast

Presidents' Message

Cancellation of May and June Luncheons

INSIDE THE INFORMER

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RETIRED EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION OF ORANGE COUNTY, INC.

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