

SAN JOSE Retired Employees Association

A non-profit association devoted to the welfare of all retired City of San Jose Employees and dedicated to the protection and integrity of the Retirement System

Volume 15, Issue 11

November 2011



From Your President

Looking Ahead/Moving Forward

Edited by Bob Leininger, SJREA President

LOOKING AHEAD/MOVING FORWARD

The season of retirement reform surprises continues. The City has issued some revised draft ballot measures, including new COLA language. Earlier versions called for a permanent reduction for current retirees from 3% to 1%. The **new language calls for a complete suspension of all retiree COLAs until 2017** with the City Council then having the discretion to raise it up to a maximum of 3%. The second surprise is an updated 5-year chart showing the 2016 projected retirement cost obligation up \$31 million to \$431 million. All of this is before negotiations are complete so the actuary cannot incorporate the new pension rules for new hires, opt in for existing employees, etc! Seems to this writer that the City is anxious to move ahead with a ballot measure for a special election in March 2012. We have been told the \$2.4+ million cost for a special election has been set aside.

We will keep you informed via the website and the email alert list when critical City Council actions are scheduled.

Given the significant retirement reform submittals from the unions, as well as the settlement offer made last month by the Police and Fire Retirees Association, this Board of Directors decided that the situation in City Hall made an offer from the SJREA an appropriate course of action. Our letter to the City is posted on our website and copies were sent via our email list. **We proposed that the top 1/3 of Federated pensioners accept a 2% COLA for the next 4 years. All others would stay at 3%. In addition, 40% of the SRBR fund balance (about \$12**

million+/-) would be transferred to the unfunded medical liability account. In exchange, a more acceptable system for determining retiree medical plan design, as well as the system for determining premiums would be identified. The unilateral decision making process now being used by the City opens up the likelihood of huge reductions in medical coverage and increases in costs to retirees. A more collaborative medical plan program was an express condition to the above offers on the COLA and SRBR. (It should be noted that many legal advisors have emphasized the point that even if the City accepts our proposal, any retiree can sue the City in their own name for violation of his/hers vested rights.)

All employee groups and both retiree associations now have proposals on the table. Hopefully the City will: (1) update the projected cost savings based on the proposals, (2) take a fresh look at the actuarial assumptions, (3) re-poll the voters concerning tax revenue enhancements, and (4) develop a long-range economic development strategy that will address the San Jose's horrendous jobs/ housing imbalance. In this context, the City Council can then make a more informed decision regarding a ballot measure. There does not seem to be any good reason to rush a ballot measure, especially with everyone working hard to develop viable reforms.

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SAVE THE DATES



December 7 Holiday Luncheon - Wyndham Hotel

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FROM YOUR PRESIDENT CONT.

November open enrollment for 2012 medical plans is in full swing and you should have received a letter from Retirement Services regarding your plans, schedule for provider presentations, etc. **If you have not received your letter, call retirement services at 408-794-1000. Any changes you wish to make must be received by November 30, 2011.**

As previously mentioned, the City has decided that a \$25 co-pay plan will be the 2012 Plan for Medicare retirees. There will be higher in-hospital doctor fees, increases for prescriptions, and some other increases. Legal analysis (including the City's outside counsel) makes clear that we have vested rights. We are consulting with our outside legal counsel regarding remedies should an acceptable solution not be found. If more people were aware of how many retirees have lower pension amounts, are in their seventies and in relatively poor health, and not able to go back to work, they would have a better understanding of the situation. This is particularly true with Retirees who save the City considerable money on an annual basis once they enroll in Medicare.

Protection of the pension and medical benefits of all retirees is this Association's top priority, and this Board will continue to speak out on the retiree's behalf. In the meantime, keep smiling, we're retired!

Speaker of the Month

After the Pledge of Allegiance led by Rafael Jimenez, Vice President John Pletsch gave a few announcements:

- Open enrollment period has started. Everyone should be receiving information from the Retirement Services Department.
- The Holiday Luncheon will be held on December 7th at the Wyndham Hotel and we will once again have a food drive.
- Elections for Board members will be held in January, so please offer your services as we have several vacancies to fill.
- Mike Console announced that day trips are temporarily suspended but there is a cruise on the East Coast. More information in this Newsletter.

Second Harvest Food Bank donation bags were available and information about the food drive was distributed – foods that are especially preferred include meals in a can

such as stew or chili, tuna and canned meat, peanut butter, low-sugar cereal, 100% fruit juices, canned fruit packed in juice, canned low-salt vegetables, and cans with pop-top lids. You can also donate funds online at donate.shfb.org or by phone at 866-234-3663. If you cannot attend this year's luncheon, please consider donating during the season to food drives and clothing drives.

John introduced our guest speaker for the day, Jim Reber, who has been instrumental in founding San Jose "institutions" such as the San Jose Repertory Theater and Inner-City Games. He is now working on the San Jose Parks Foundation (SJPF), whose membership donations will support long-term organizational goals to help San Jose's nearly 3,000 acres of parkland, over 200 community parks, and lots more.

The City's Parks and Recreation Department (PRNS) have been cut nearly 40% in 3 years and SJPF works with community groups to focus on improvements and maintenance at the very local level. By doing this, the neighborhood solutions result from people owning their nearby parks, and benefits are seen by all. SJPF is looking for board members and representation from all Council districts, and encourages everyone to join SJPF by calling 408-893-PARK or visiting www.sanjoseparks.org and telling two friends about the organization to spread the word! Noted as current donors are Rose Crimi and the Association of Retired San Jose Police Officers and Firefighters. With a variety of donation levels, Jim Reber encouraged all attendees to consider joining the San Jose Parks Foundation today!

TOURING WITH THE CALIFORNIA PIONEERS



**October 26 – November 11, 2012
CANADA & NEW ENGLAND**

Beautiful scenery is always on display when you cruise down the east coast during the peak weeks of autumn. And with the fall foliage seemingly aflame, there's no better way to sit back and enjoy Mother Nature's dazzling show than aboard the **Norwegian Dawn**, of NCL Cruises. Along the way visit an exciting array of east coast ports: *Quebec City, Quebec-Canada; Portland, Maine; Boston; New York; Norfolk, Virginia; Baltimore, Maryland; Charleston, South Carolina; Miami, Key West and Tampa, Florida.*

For more information call Mike Console at (408) 246-1080

FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS2011 OFFICERS

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Donna Jewett	(408) 264-6780
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Ed Overton	(408) 859-4162
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From the Department of Retirement Service

1737 N. First Street, Ste. 580, San Jose, CA 95112
Phone: (408) 794-1000 or toll free (800) 732-6477
Email: retirement.dept@sanjoseca.gov

RETIREMENTS

Greg L. Davis, Network Technician, Information Technology Department, 12/24/2011

Mharr L. Dirige, Environmental Inspector II, Environmental Services Department, 9/17/2011

Patricia J. Fay, Senior Crime and Intelligent Analyst, Police Department, 11/26/2011

Antonio G. Perez, Warehouse Worker II, Environmental Services Department, 10/1/2011

DEFERRED VESTED

Patrick R. Carnahan, Senior Custodian, Airport Department, 9/26/2011

Mary B. Lindemuth, Library Assistant, Library Department, 9/23/2011

David Moreno, Supervising Auditor, Auditor's Office, 11/27/2011

Leo B. Taa, Custodian, Airport Department, 9/6/2011

Eric Uneberg, Equipment Mechanic Assistant, General Services Department, 10/19/2011

Angelina J. Wendling, Custodian, Airport Department, 10/27/2011

CONDOLENCES

Robert P. Baca, Principal Construction Inspector, retired 10/17/87, died 9/24/2011

John D. Colla, Maintenance Worker II, retired 4/23/02, died 8/12/2011

Pedro A. Hernandez, Maintenance Worker II, retired 5/21/1983, died 9/5/2011

Steven R. Herron, Office Specialist II, retired 5/20/2006, died 9/1/2011

Sandra J. Nunes, Police Data Specialist II, retired 3/21/2009, died 10/18/2011

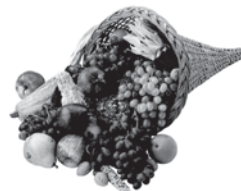
Margaret R. Pattee, Typist Clark II, retired 6/10/1978, died 10/17/2011

Rodolfo O. Zuniga, Maintenance Worker II, retired 2/9/1985, died 8/13/2011

5 BITS OF TURKEY TALK

1. At maturity, a turkey has 3,500 feathers.
2. Wild turkeys like to spend the night in trees.
3. The flap of skin that hangs over the beak is called a snood.
4. President George W. Bush pardoned the first female turkey ever in 2002. Her name was Katie.
5. A 15-pounder has about 70% white meat and 30% dark meat.

Wishing you a Happy Thanksgiving!



The San Jose Retired Employees Association cordially invites you to the
Annual Holiday Luncheon



Wednesday, December 7, 2011

11 am Social Hour – 12 noon Luncheon

WYNDHAM HOTEL
1350 North First Street at Gish

Herb Roasted Prime Rib w/Creamy Horseradish & Au Jus
Baked Salmon with Lemon Butter Sauce
Vegetable Lasagna

Dessert: Cheesecake with Raspberry Sauce

Tickets available for \$25 with the form below

Member: _____ Phone: _____
Guest: _____

Prime Rib _____
Baked Salmon _____
Lasagna _____

Make checks payable to SJREA. Reservations and checks **due by December 1st.**
Mail form and check to Joan Lockwood, 1931 Somersworth Dr., San Jose, 95124.
For further information call (408) 371-1989

BRING A CAN OF NON-PERISHABLE FOOD. ALL DONATIONS WILL BE GIVEN TO THE SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK.





As we enter the holiday season, SJREA will again be collecting non-perishable food items for the the **Second Harvest Food Bank** at the Holiday Luncheon on December 7th. You can donate individual items, or if you prefer, you can contribute Costco flats of canned food (do not break apart). You can be assured that people in need will be grateful for your kind generosity.

HOLIDAY STRESS



How could this time of year possibly be stressful? Easy! We fight throngs of people every time we shop; we run up our credit card balances, we feel the need to decorate every inch of our homes in order to get in the holiday spirit. Just thinking about it all is enough to stress out.

The holiday season is supposed to be a time of warmth, happiness and excitement. And for many people, it is, but for some, the season can be a paradox. Joyous feelings and family and religious traditions can be overshadowed by stress, fatigue and gloom – “the holiday blues”.

The holiday blues, as the name implies, tend to be temporary and seasonal, as opposed to depression, which is longer lasting and may require treatment. Factors that commonly contribute to the holiday blues tend to fall into three major categories:

1. Psychological -

- You may be facing your first holiday season without your spouse or a loved one.
- Family misunderstandings and conflict can also develop at this time or year. Traditions may be changed due to situations beyond your control.
- Strained relationships between family members may create feelings of uneasiness at family get-togethers.
- Expectations may be too high. All holiday seasons can't be ideal

2. Financial –

- The holidays bring on added financial burden. People may feel the need to spend more on holiday clothes, gifts, and entertaining.

3. Physical –

- There are additional physical strains on people. These include the strain of shopping, attending social gatherings, and baking.
- These strains may result in tension and fatigue.
- People may tend to gain weight during the holidays.



Here are some steps you can take to stay healthy during the season:

1. Acknowledge your feelings
2. Seek support. Volunteer. Helping others can be a great way to lift your spirits.
3. Be realistic
4. Set aside differences
5. Budget
6. Plan ahead
7. Don't abandon healthful habits

Remember, you don't have to do it all or prepare it all. Learn to say “no”. You don't have to accept every invitation. Set a budget and stick to it. Many families pick a name out of a hat and buy for just one family member – or set a limit on spending. Be realistic about family. Not everyone is going to behave perfectly just because it is the holiday season.

Source: Kaiser Permanente



ON THE LIGHTER SIDE! :)
By: Bob "Pi" Silverstein

Ever notice, the older we get, the more we're like computers? We start out with lots of MEMORY and DRIVE, then we become outdated, and eventually have to get our parts replaced... :-)

The best way to forget all your troubles is to wear tight shoes.

The nice part about living in a small town is that when you don't know what you're doing, someone else does.

I read this article that said the typical symptoms of stress are: eating too much, impulse buying, and driving too fast. Are they kidding? That is my idea of a perfect day!

There are several openings for the SJREA Board of Directors, including the position of Treasurer. Many of the existing members have been on the Board for 8-12 years and would like to be replaced. New faces, especially recent retirees, would be a welcome addition. The Board meets once a month on the first Thursday from 9-10:30 at Leininger Center prior to the General Membership meeting from 10:30-12:30.



It is an opportunity to keep up to date with the communication between the Mayor, City Council, City Manager, active employee groups, and the Police & Fire Retirees as it relates to the various proposals of health benefits and other retirement issues.

Interested retirees should contact John Pletsch at jeplet@sbcglobal.net or call 408-504-1255. The Board elections are held in January and the term is for 1 year.

If they are still taking \$2.00 for SJREA membership dues from your pension check, please fill out and mail the form below.

San Jose Retired Employees Association – Membership Form

(X) I authorize the Federated City Employees Retirement System to deduct the approved current monthly rate of \$4.00 from my retirement check for SJREA dues. I understand that this approval would include the deduction of future dues changes from my pension check. Any dues changes would require a vote of the general membership. I also authorize the FCERS to release my mailing address to SJREA. I may terminate my membership at any time by contacting FCERS.

Name: _____ Phone Number _____

Address: _____ Email _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Signature _____ Date of Retirement _____

Tear off and mail to: SJREA, P.O. Box 26515, San Jose, CA. 95159-6515

Visit our website...

www.sjrea.org

LET US HEAR FROM YOU...check out our website www.SJREA.org.
You can download the Newsletter, view upcoming events and links to useful sites.

Save money, save paper! Sign up to receive the newsletter through e-mail.
Sent a note to: newslettersjrea@gmail.com

Calendar of Events

December 7

Holiday Luncheon - Wyndham Hotel

If you change your **e-mail address**, please send to CSJREA@yahoo.com and if you change your **mailing address**, send to sjretirees@aol.com.

Thanks to Joan Lockwood for the refreshments.

Congratulations to to **John Pletsch** (who donated his prize money to the Parks Foundation) and **Chuck Johnson** our November Door Prize Winners!

Welcome Visiting Member Nona Tobin from Nevada
and New Members Lyn McQuade & Anne Ortiz



Would you like to submit a story, vacation travels, or special events and have them published in the Newsletter? Please send to Joan Lockwood at joanL49@msn.com or mail to SJREA, P.O. Box 26515, San Jose, CA 95159-6515

SAN JOSÉ RETIRED EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
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NEXT MEETING: **December 7, 2011**

TIME: Social Hour - 11:00 AM
Lunch - 12:00 PM

PLACE: Wyndham Hotel
1350 North First Street

PRICE: \$25.00 each

Reservations due by December 1st
Form inside this newsletter