

REMCO NEWSLETTER

Retired Employees of Merced County-September 2013



The quarterly luncheon will be held on **Tuesday, September 10th** at the *Merced Elks Lodge*, 19th & "M" Streets, Merced. The doors will be open at 11:30 AM. The program will begin at 12 Noon and lunch will be served at 12:30 PM. Reservations are a must so the proper amount of food can be prepared. REMCO is required to pay for the number of meals ordered so unpaid reservations come from our treasury. The following people will accept your reservation:

Karolyn Alvarez (209) 358-9372 or
Email: Karol_retired_95301@yahoo.com

Lola Barnett (209) 384-4185 (Office 8-5,
Mon-Fri or leave message)

Officers & Board of Directors

President: Sandy Teague, PhD	769-7331
Vice President: Kaye Greeley	394-9091
Secretary: Lavon Justice	722-8202
Treasurer: Lola Barnett	384-4185
Director: Michael Sofranek	374-3465
Director: Marie McDonagh	723-0917
Director: Vivian Stierwalt	723-7065
Director: Linc Clendenin	722-1306
Director: Scott Johnston	617-2126
Director: Ron Kinchloe	409-8394
Past President: Lola Barnett	384-4185
Retirement Bd Rep: Ron Kinchloe	409-8394
Retirement Bd Alt: Scott Johnston	617-2126

Appointed Staff

CRCEA Delegate: David Baker
CRCEA Delegate: Kaye Greeley
Newsletter Editor: John Carlisle 722-9249
jbc76@sbcglobal.net

REMCO WEBSITE: www.REMCOMerced.com



Greetings REMCO Members:

The association that we, as Merced County retirees, are honored to be a part of as an active membership is comprised of many components.

Over the past years there have been numerous assaults upon such things as health benefits, pension plans, savings, contributions and continued membership. Our responsibility is to make the association an entity that everyone is proud of and desirable for new retirees. To assume these responsibilities we must have an energetic and enthusiastic Board of Directors. These individuals, whose main goal is to keep an ever vigilant eye on our well being as well as present an enjoyable meeting for everyone also work hard to put the meetings together.

To that end Director "Linc" Clendenin has been doing a great job of keeping pace with the County health plan issues. He has presented numerous articles and presentations of what to expect in the next several months. It is important to us as we age into an ever increasing need for good medical care that we understand our benefits and the need for making good choices. There is more information on pending health plan changes elsewhere in this newsletter. Sadly, the changes reflect the harsh realities of today's economy to a degree and are something we must live with at this point. It could have been worse and REMCO has done all it could do to lessen the financial impact on retirees.

Another area of importance to the association is our financial status. Directors Ron Kinchloe, David Baker, Lola Barnett and LaVon Justice have been busy at work to ensure our assets are safe and growing, with a growing amount for any litigation possibilities that may arise, if needed.



Director Mike Sofranek has done outstanding work re-organizing the raffle prizes and hopefully members will enjoy the results. He has also been very instrumental in designing the Merced REMCO web page. It is a valuable site to visit and to obtain up to date information

on a variety of issues relevant to REMCO. Newsletters will also be found on the website for those of you who do not receive the emailed version. If you are not on the email list, please provide the Newsletter Editor with your name and email address and you will be added, which means you will receive the newsletter sooner than the snail-mailed version. His email will be found at the bottom of the first column of this newsletter.

Director Sofranek has asked our Board if there is an interest in hosting a special event for our membership, to replace a quarterly luncheon. In the past, we have scheduled our (4) luncheons through the year. We would like to look at putting on a picnic or other social event that would include a nice BBQ meal and entertainment. Hopefully, something like this could be scheduled at a time when members who do not live in the immediate area could arrange to attend. Please let us know if this is of interest to you. If there is a significant desire for such an event we will explore the possibilities in the future.

Director Ron Kinchloe is currently directing his efforts towards some important technical work to make our organization more stable in the long run and we appreciate his efforts greatly. With the introduction of monthly Board meetings, the quarterly luncheons can be restructured to accommodate less business and more social interaction. Director Kaye Greeley has provided a listing of professional agencies engaged in providing needed services to seniors, such as estate planning, taxes, health providers, etc. Hopefully this will prove to be a useful directory, providing answers to questions on who to talk with or where to go for services. Please contact Kaye if you have resource information to contribute that may be of interest to members.

It has been my desire to use the quarterly luncheons as a platform for entertaining and informative topics through the use of guest speakers. The topics should be of use to all members in providing knowledge of current events. The speakers will be limited to no more than ten minutes each, with time set aside for an individual one-on-one question and answer period. Past President Carlisle has

asked a representative of Merced County Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program (HICAP) to make a short presentation at the September 2013 Luncheon. They will present a short definition of services offered to seniors, providing more 'where to go' to obtain services type of information, as well as explaining what they can do for retirees.



As retirees, most of you pay close attention to how far your dollar goes. You are dependent on a steady, but fixed, income from your hard-earned pension. While those "cost-of-living" increases help a lot for Tier 1 retirees, they can be quickly eroded by significant inflation. While we have a right to be concerned about the impact of inflation, we are fortunate to have a pension system that is relatively well funded and well managed. Together we can all work to preserve and protect our pensions.



HEALTH COVERAGE CHANGING!



Enclosed in this newsletter you will find a 4 page enclosure that briefly describes the Retiree Health Coverage that will go into effect on **January 1, 2014**. The enclosure is a document that was prepared by the County Administration for the Board of Supervisors meeting where the BOS adopted the plan. You will be receiving more detailed information from the County in the near future. While this is something REMCO is not particularly in favor of for the most part, the reality is this is what we will be stuck with and we need to educate ourselves to make the most of it. It could have been worse and at least the County consulted with REMCO and changes were made before arriving at this final plan.





THANKS!!!

Thanks to REMCO member **Karolyn Alvarez** for her efforts in volunteering to help Lola Barnett take reservations for REMCO luncheons. Those efforts are much appreciated. That said, we are now looking for a new volunteer to take her place. If you are willing to assist in this four times a year, please let President Teague, or any Board Member, know as soon as possible. Those duties would start with the December, 2013 meeting.

PEPPER SPRAY CLASS



Mike Sofranek would like to know if there are any REMCO members interested in participating in a **Pepper Spray For Self Defense** class. If there is sufficient interest, he can arrange a class in Merced in the future. You can call him at (209) 374-3465 or email him at: REMCOMERCED@YAHOO.COM. (I guess even retirement can't override the law enforcement officer part of him!)



DID YOU KNOW??

Prescription drug abuse kills more people in the U.S. than auto accidents! Recent stats from the Federal government show that emergency rooms nationwide have experienced a stunning increase in admissions related to this issue. The drugs most often seen include benzodiazepines (such as Valium, Xanax, Klonopin) and opiates (such as Percocet, hydrocodone (Vicodin, Lortab), morphine and Methadone). Do not use these drugs without a current prescription and then only as directed by your physician and after advising the physician of any and all other drugs you may have. Long term use of these drugs, even if legally prescribed, can lead to addiction and/or abuse issues – or even death!



Muhammed Shittu, Mental Health 04/25/2013
Kenneth Havens, Public Health 05/02/2013
Jerry Rusticus, DPW- Roads 05/10/2013
Judith Keswick, Public Health 06/04/2013
Heather House, HSA 06/08/2013
George Kidd, Sheriff 06/08/2013
Gale Garcia, Retirement 06/15/2013
Sonia George, H.S.A 06/17/2013
Karen Hazeltine, Sheriff 06/20/2013
Thomas Schiffler, Mental Health 06/27/2013
Dina Cheek, H.S.A 07/01/2013
David Fuentes, Planning 07/05/2013
Kenneth Mah, H.S.A 07/06/2013
Karen Vaughn, Health 07/11/2013
Susan Dierker, H.S.A. 07/13/2013
Dennis Queen, Public Health 07/13/2013
David A. Olsen, County Counsel 07/27/2013
Nancy Havens, DWI 08/02/2013
Vicki L. Valenzuela, H.S.A. 8/05/2013



Ruby M. Norton May 18, 2013
Buddy M. Love June 13, 2013
Shirley M. Forte June 4, 2013
Thomas F. Cuculich July 13, 2013
Lia Jo Miller July 6, 2013
Ralph "Sandy" Garcia August 3, 2013



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Retired Employees of Merced County
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