



# THE BULLETIN

Retired Employees of the City & County of San Francisco, Inc.

## President's Message

By Sue Blomberg, President

As I write this message, I am watching the live coverage of the Carnival cruise ship, Triumph, being towed through the seas to the Mobile, Alabama dock. I have just read stories in *Reader's Digest* about four people who made a difference in their communities in the days following Hurricane Sandy. I can remember my own experiences following the 1989 earthquake, and I realize that everyone has their own story about a time that was a disaster for them, a time that challenged their usual way of living day to day.

Everyone hopes that s/he will shine when faced with a situation that requires courage to step out of their norm: the driver who stops at an accident to see if anyone needs help; the person who stays behind to assist a handicapped person get out of a building in an emergency; and the teacher who shields her students from harm. We all like to believe that we will do as they have done, but some of us know deep down we are more likely to wait and see if anyone else will help. It has become the norm to say that the situation doesn't



involve me. *Not true!*

I find it very discouraging to watch the news, read the newspaper, and go online these days since the reports of violence seem to have escalated *way* beyond what it was even five years ago. The newspaper last week reported a murder of some sort in every city in the Bay Area—in one day! There is such a problem with drugs, gangs, and bullying that we become jaded about the

*continued on Page 2*

### March 2013 Calendar

**Regular Meeting**  
 Wednesday, March 13  
 Socializing and refreshments:  
 11:10 – 11:50 a.m.  
 Program: 11:30 a.m.  
 Business meeting: noon  
 Bingo: 12:45 p.m.  
 Irish Cultural Center,  
 45th Ave. & Sloat Blvd.

**The Bulletin**  
**Editorial Committee Meeting**  
 Tuesday, March 19, 9 a.m.  
 Taraval Police Station  
 All interested parties welcome.

**Executive Board Meeting**  
 Tuesday, March 19, 10 a.m.  
 Taraval Police Station  
 All interested parties welcome.

**Public Meetings:**  
**Retired Firemen & Widows Association**  
 Sunday, March 10, 2 p.m.  
 St. Gabriel Caf., 40th Ave. & Ulloa

**Veteran Police Officers**  
 Tuesday, March 12, 11 a.m.  
 Pacific Rod & Gun Club,  
 520 John Muir Dr., at Lake Merced

**Retirement System**  
 Wednesday, March 13, 2 p.m.  
 30 Van Ness, Suite 3000

**Health Service System**  
 Tuesday, March 12, 1 p.m.  
 City Hall, Room 416

**UESF Retired Division**  
 For time/location, contact  
 Gerry Meister at (415) 956-8373 or  
[gerrymeister1@earthlink.net](mailto:gerrymeister1@earthlink.net)

### Useful Phone Numbers

**S.F. Retirement System**  
 Web site: [www.sfgov.org/sfers](http://www.sfgov.org/sfers)  
 Phone Numbers:  
 (415) 487-7000 • (888) 849-0777

**Health Service System**  
 Web site: [www.myhss.org](http://www.myhss.org)  
 Phone Numbers:  
 (415) 554-1750 • (800) 541-2266  
**Phone Hours for both:**  
 8:00 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## In This Issue

Ad Hoc Comm. Report	p. 3	Travel Report	p. 5
Health Service Report	p. 3	Retirement Report	p. 6
February Meeting Photos	p. 4	POB Report	p. 7

## New Members

Jeannie D'Arcy	DPH
Philomena R. Margan	PRT
Barbara Morris	CRT
Kervin L. Silas	POL
Mary Vigo	---

## President's Message

*continued from Page 1*

reports of one more incident.

I have great difficulty in understanding how one person can harm others. I think that this type of violence is abhorrent and senseless. The other type of violence brought about by acts of nature (earthquakes, floods, hurricanes and tornadoes), while devastating to some, seems easier to understand because we didn't cause it—there was nothing we could have done to prevent it.

All emergencies require that we find the courage to help our families and friends. It may be helping a neighbor recover personal items after a storm or fire. It may be donating blood. It may be sending a check to the Red Cross. We do what we can. But we *must* do it. No man is an island—if we don't help our neighbor, no one will help us.

### SEIU 1021 West Bay Retirees Chapter

Monday, March 18, Noon-2 p.m.  
Union Hall, 350 Rhode Island St.,  
100 South Bldg.  
Claire Zvanski at (415) 341-3085 or  
[czvanski@hotmail.com](mailto:czvanski@hotmail.com)

Ladies wore corsets, which would lace up in the front. A proper and dignified woman, as in 'straight laced' wore a tightly tied lace.

## Membership and Subscriptions

**Retired City Employees: annual membership is \$36 per year or \$400 for a lifetime (may be payable over four months or over four years in increments of \$100 per year).**

- Subscription only is \$36 per year.
- Please download membership application form from our Web site, [www.sfretirees.org](http://www.sfretirees.org).

*The Bulletin* is the publication of the Retired Employees of the City & County of San Francisco, Inc., a nonprofit organization. *The Bulletin* is published to express the policies, ideals and accomplishments of the organization. Nothing shall be published herein that is racist, sexist, ageist or that is derogatory towards religious beliefs and other personal issues; nor shall be published anything in violation of Article VII, Section 1 of the Constitution. Editorial contributions from individuals, organizations and groups other than RECCSF and its members may be included in *The Bulletin* only upon the approval of the Editorial Committee.

Subscriptions to *The Bulletin* are available for \$36. Submissions to *The Bulletin* are solicited and encouraged and should be submitted to:

**RECCSF Office, Attn: Sheila Mullen**  
**3915 Irving Street, S.F., Ca. 94122-1294**  
**Telephone: (415) 681-5949 Fax: (415) 681-5398**  
**[alcasciato@stisia.com](mailto:alcasciato@stisia.com) and [sheilamullen@mac.com](mailto:sheilamullen@mac.com)**

**Al Casciato, Editor**

**RECCSF OFFICERS:**

**Sue Blomberg, President**

**Al Casciato, 1st Vice President**

**John Madden, 2nd Vice President**

**Claire Zvanski, Secretary**

**George Lau, Treasurer**

**Leo Martinez, Sergeant-at-Arms**

## Rest In Peace

The following members have recently passed away.

Irgen A. Amundsen	FIR	Joe M. Nakanishi	DPH
Robert J. Cardinale	POL	Robert R. Palmer	DPT
Don E. Cowley	PRT	Joan Pierucci	GEN
Betty L. Dong	DSS	Evelyn T. Porter	POL
Lorraine Dougherty	GEN	John E. Portoni	POL
Albert Fernandez	FIR	Lena C. Riley	FIR
Ruth E. Haskell	DPH	Carol D. Saulovich	BOE
Leonard Jeffers, Jr.	HHP	Patrick K. Simmons	POL
Frank Kovach	POL	Linna "Linda" Wang	DPH

# Health Service Committee Report

By Ray Mason and  
Claire Zvanski

## City Plan I Crisis Continues

When the new calendar plan year began this January, all 10,000 Plan I members found themselves without membership cards, and being assigned incorrect group numbers and pharmacy providers. Retired members could not renew their medications, keep doctor appointments, or access other medical services. While most of the problems are now resolved, HSS staff is still working overtime with United Healthcare (UHC) staff to make sure each member's benefits are accurate and accessible.

Many diabetic members were told that test strips were no longer covered under their Medicare Part D coverage. UHC staff finally made the corrections reflecting the actual Plan I benefit through OptumRx, their new Medicare pharmacy provider. Medco remains for non-Medicare members.

UHC states that all should be corrected and reconciled by March 1. HSS staff continues daily meetings with UHC staff to monitor the progress and verify member coverage. Letters will be sent to Plan I members with explanations, and directions to resolve remaining problems.

## eMerge: Continuing Constipation

Five months into this new system, implementation problems continue. The controller has five Oracle PeopleSoft experts working alongside HSS benefits analysts and finance staff to identify work processes that could be improved, and to identify root causes of the continuing issues. HSS staff continues to work overtime as all member transactions still

require manual processing.

And 1,100 CalSTRS members remain very upset since the system missed their 12/31/12 deductions, resulting in unjustified terminations; efforts continue to contact each affected member.

## Budget

Late in 2012, the mayor's office openly acknowledged the significant contributions made by the HSS Board in holding health benefit costs down and saving the City tens of thousands of dollars. However, budget directions firmly require a 1.5% cut in year one and an additional 3% cut in year two to help the City meet its anticipated budget shortfalls of \$130M in 2013/14 and \$134M in 2014/15.

## Better News

The 2014 rates and benefits process has begun. Preliminary Plan I experience and rates were presented by the HSS actuarial

consultant, AON Hewitt. The preliminary recommendation is to give Plan I medical coverage a rate pass due to good claims experience and low trends. There might be slight cost increases as final Plan I rates also include vision, pharmacy and administrative fees. Experience will continue to be tracked over the next three months.

The Feb. 14 meeting was the final one for Supervisor Carmen Chu, who was appointed assessor. Her departing comments were complimentary and kind. She declined to comment on her potential replacement.

Questions? Comments? Please contact Health Service Committee Chair Ray Mason at (650) 344-1506.

---

In the 1400s a law was set forth in England that a man was allowed to beat his wife with a stick no thicker than his thumb. Hence we have "the rule of thumb"

---

# Ad Hoc Committee Report

By Linda Tabor-Beck, Chair

The "Frugal Few" extend our thanks to our fantastic members for your participation in our continuing effort to avoid having to raise dues.

Voluntary donations at the refreshment table are just about covering the cost of the refreshments. Bravo!

Also, the new room seems to be working out very well; and the \$100 rent reduction per meeting also helps the cause.

We sold enough tickets to be able to give away all three of our grocery store gift cards! We took a vote on whether to repeat the grocery store gift cards or to switch to department store cards like Macy's, Target, etc.

The grocery store coupons won, so we'll do a rerun of the Safeway/Lucky/Trader Joe's at the March 13 general membership meeting.

*Also, if you have an e-mail account but are currently receiving The Bulletin by U.S. mail, please consider subscribing to an e-mail copy at [reccsf@att.net](mailto:reccsf@att.net). You will receive your Bulletin sooner than the printed copy, and RECCSF will experience significant savings in postage costs.*

I want to personally thank all of you who are supporting our committee's efforts. Also, thank you for the suggestions you continue to provide at [cane\\_elder@yahoo.com](mailto:cane_elder@yahoo.com). We're making significant progress!

# FEBRUARY MEMBERSHIP MEETING



*Linda Tabor-Beck roamed the room selling RECCSF fundraising raffle tickets for coupons to participating grocery stores; here she engages with members Beverley Nelson and Jill Selchau.*



*Volunteers Josephine Healy, Pat D'Arcy and Ellen Shanahan reported that the new refreshment donation basket is a great success.*



*RECCSF Office Manager Reyna Kuk assisted speaker Joe Fitting in setting up his presentation.*

*Speaker Joe Fitting, Vice President of Education and Conservation, San Francisco Zoological Society, gave a fascinating presentation on youth involvement, volunteer opportunities, tours and features, and ongoing conservation and capital projects at the zoo.*



*Zoo docent Georgeanne Wedergren was also on hand to provide visitor information, and to encourage signups for potential zoo volunteers.*



# Foreclosure Rescue Scams

By Casey Mysliwy, San Francisco Federal Credit Union

- If you are unable to keep up with your mortgage, you may be tempted to enlist the help of a foreclosure rescue agency. **Don't.** These types of agencies are usually run by con artists looking to take advantage of vulnerable homeowners. Popular scams include:
- *Phantom help:* The con artists claim they can negotiate an agreement with your lender, but they require an upfront fee. They may also ask you to start paying your mortgage to them. After they get your money, they usually disappear. There are some foreclosure rescue agencies that may try to contact your lender, but all they are really doing is charging you a fee for something you can do yourself.

- *Rent to own:* The con artists claim that by giving them the title to your house, they will take over your mortgage payments and allow you to stay and pay a reasonable rent. They promise you can buy back the home in a few years. However, the reality is quite different. If there is equity in your home, the scammers may drain it by taking out a home equity loan or refinancing. Other possibilities: They may raise the rent to an unaffordable level and evict you when you cannot pay it or set the purchase price so high that you cannot afford to buy the house back.
- *Fake refinancing:* The con artists claim that they are refinancing your loan to bring it current and have you sign the "loan papers." However,

often what you are really doing is signing over the title of your home, leaving the con artists free to refinance, take out a home equity loan, or sell the home and keep the profit for themselves. Or, they may charge you a hefty upfront fee for their services and give you bogus paperwork.

Legitimate help is available. As a benefit of belonging to San Francisco Federal Credit Union, you have access to BALANCE, a free financial counseling and education service. A counselor at BALANCE can assess your current financial situation and discuss options for your mortgage and how to approach your lender. To find out more, call BALANCE at (888) 456-2227, or visit [www.balancepro.net](http://www.balancepro.net).

---

## John Donne

(1572-1631)

No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as a manor of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore — never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.



By Beverly Pardini and Marylou Allen

### Wed-Fri, March 20-22

Two nights at the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno, with casino visits for machine play and food credits. Included: group dinner at Louie's Basque Restaurant in downtown Reno.

### Mon-Fri, April 15-19

Travel south to spend one night in Santa Barbara, two nights in Lakeside near San Diego and one night in San Luis Obispo. Enjoy a tour of the beautiful Flower Fields at Carlsbad, with an included lunch. SeaWorld in San Diego is included, as well as a visit to Old Town San Diego, and a farewell dinner at the Madonna Inn.

### Thur, May 2

One-hour walking tour at Monterey Zoological Vision

## Travel Committee Report

Quest Ranch in Salinas; ranch provides professionally and humanely trained wild/exotic and domestic birds and animals for film, television, live productions and education, and also functions as a sanctuary. Included: chance to feed an elephant and lunch after tour at boyhood home of John Steinbeck.

### Tue-Thur, May 14-16

Two nights at the Carson Valley Inn in Minden, Nevada at the foot of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Relax and enjoy casino fun; second day trip to South Lake Tahoe for two-hour narrated cruise onboard the MS Dixie Paddlewheel to Emerald Bay; lunch included.

Info: Marylou at  
1 (800) 334-3465 or  
[mrylallen@yahoo.com](mailto:mrylallen@yahoo.com).

# Retirement Committee Report

By Jean S. Thomas,  
Herb Meiberger, CFA,  
and Stephen Herold

## Some Things to Smile About:

- **Plan Performance.** Preliminary SFERS gross-of-fees performance figures as of 1/31/2013 are: Plan value of \$16.6B and seven months fiscal year to date (FYTD) earnings of 10.3%—with the latter handily outstripping the entire FY 2012/13 investment goal of 7.58%. Equities (stocks), about 52% of the total portfolio's market value, are the star performers at 15.9% FYTD returns.
- **Basic Cost of Living Adjustment (Basic COLA).** At its 2/13/2013 meeting, the SFERS Board approved a 2% cost of living increase for all miscellaneous and new safety retirees who retired before 7/2/2013. (New safety retirees are police and fire who were hired on or after 7/2/1976.) The increase will begin 7/1/2013, be in effect through 6/30/2014, and will be 2% compound interest based upon our 6/30/2013 gross benefit (new basic COLA amount=6/30/2013 monthly gross benefit times 2 %).

The basic COLA is based upon the previous December to December percentage increase (or decrease) in the U.S. Department of Labor's San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose consumer price index, or CPI. The percentage increase from December 2011 to December 2012 was 2.2%. Rounded to the nearest whole percent, as the charter requires, gives a full 2% increase in FY 2013/14 but no "overage" to put into our COLA "banks."

The maximum annual basic COLA increase is 2%; any excess is rounded to the nearest

whole percent and is added to our individual COLA banks. The banks are "drawn down" (reduced) in any fiscal year when the CPI is under 2%. A quick look at SFERS' schedule of *Excess Accumulated CPI Increases as of 7/1/2013* shows the dramatic decline in CPIs, especially in the last ten years or so. Examples: those who retired 7/2/1999-7/1/2000 have COLA banks of 9%; those who retired 7/2/2007-7/1/2010 have 2%; those who retired 7/2/2010-7/1/2012 have only 1%.

## Two Board of Supervisors' Recommended Divestment Proposals

These are nonbinding resolutions introduced by Supervisor **John Avalos** (District 11). The first, just recently passed by the full Board of Supervisors, was inspired by recent gun violence—particularly Sandy Hook—and asks the SFERS Board to divest of all directly owned or commingled firearms and munitions assets within five years. CalSTRS (California State Teachers' Retirement System) and some other public plans have adopted similar programs. To date, *Cerberus*, an SFERS money manager, has voluntarily sold its gun-related assets worth \$500,000; SFERS estimates that an additional \$400,000 of gun-related assets remain in the SFERS portfolio. Our latest information is that the resolution is calendared for the March 13, 2013 SFERS Board meeting. Stay tuned for developments.

The second resolution asks SFERS to stop further purchases of fossil fuels, and to divest within five years of all existing fossil fuels remaining in the portfolio. The resolution has been referred to the Board of Supervisors' Budget & Finance Committee (Supervisor

Mark Farrell, District 2, committee chair). If this program were implemented, it would have a substantial, but not yet quantified, financial impact on SFERS asset holdings. It is not calendared for SFERS Board discussion or action.

## Vocal Opposition to Predatory Home Lending Practices Continues at the 2/11/2013 SFERS Board meeting

Last month, we reported that several groups opposed to predatory home loan practices appeared before the SFERS Board, asking that SFERS take action (divest) of the guilty major financial institutions. This month, the groups reappeared, but speakers were exclusively city active and retired employees and an SEIU Local 1021 representative, and they specifically pinpointed Wells Fargo as the major violator. **Ed Kinchley**, SEIU 1021 spokesperson, said that Wells Fargo has paid a \$175M fine to the U.S. Government for predatory and racist lending practices—a miniscule amount, Kinchley said, considering Wells Fargo's wealth. Other speakers, mostly people of color, concurred with Kinchley's assessment and described their individual problems with predatory practices, which, they contend, continue unabated.

Commissioner **Herb Meiberger, CFA**, asked that the matter of Wells Fargo's alleged predatory lending practices be calendared before the SFERS Board, and that a resolution on the subject be presented to the Wells Fargo stockholders' meeting on April 24, 2013.

## Other Points of Interest

- The SFERS Investment Di-

*continued on next page*

# Protect Our Benefits Report

By Claire Zvanski, POB member

*Protect Our Benefits is an independent political action committee which falls under the provisions of the San Francisco Ethics Commission and is not part of RECCSF. The opinions presented are those of the author.*

## **The POB Supplementary COLA Lawsuit Moving Ahead**

The time to actually bring formal legal action to protect the vested pensions of city retirees who receive their pensions from the SFERS has finally arrived. In February, our legal team filed in the San Francisco Superior Court.

The decision to take this critical case to court was not easily made. Many months of research, along with many months of waiting for the state attorney general's opinion, preceded this decision. City retirees (SFERS pensioners) are stakeholders with vested rights who are being harmed now, and forever into the future. POB has been watching the performance of the SFERS trust fund investments very closely. The fund has been recovering at an amazing rate (see the Retirement System Report for greater detail). The threshold for the annual 2%

COLA has been met, but not the threshold for the supplemental COLA as now defined by Proposition C. If that section had not been altered, the performance of the fund would be generating the additional 1.5% supplemental COLA.

*This is now a very critical and expensive time as the formal lawsuit begins its journey through the courts. Your continuing contributions toward financing the POB lawsuit are very much appreciated.* Please make your check payable to Protect Our Benefits, and mail it to Protect Our Benefits (POB), P.O. Box 320057, San Francisco, CA 94132. Your donation is not tax deductible under federal or state law.

## **Retiree Healthcare: The Other Face of Proposition C**

Supervisor Carmen Chu said her goodbyes at the February Health Service Board meeting. She would not comment on her replacement. Rumors continue that Supervisor Mark Farrell wants to fill this seat. He is regularly quoted about ending the City's responsibility to provide retiree healthcare through a charter amendment for the November ballot. Since California courts have now recognized that

retiree healthcare is a vested benefit, POB is anxious to see his charter amendment.

The other concern is the Proposition C replacement of one of the elected commissioners with a third city hall appointee—from the controller's office. The calendar issued by the HSS indicates that 2014 rates will not be finalized before this change occurs, giving the city the four critical votes to pass the final rates. There is little question that we need to start preparing for yet another fight.

Questions? Comments? Contact POB, P.O. Box 320057, San Francisco CA 94132.

---

## **Historical Trivia**

Early politicians required feedback from the public to determine what the people considered important. Since there were no telephones, TV's or radios, the politicians sent their assistants to local taverns, pubs, and bars. They were told to 'go sip some Ale and listen to people's conversations and political concerns. Many assistants were dispatched at different times. 'You go sip here' and 'You go sip there.' The two words 'go sip' were eventually combined when referring to the local opinion and, thus we have the term 'gossip.'

---

At local taverns, pubs, and bars, people drank from pint and quart-sized containers. A bar maid's job was to keep an eye on the customers and keep the drinks coming. She had to pay close attention and remember who was drinking in 'pints' and who was drinking in 'quarts,' hence the phrase 'minding your 'P's and Q's'.

---

## **Retirement Committee Report**

*continued from previous page*

vision has filled three new professional-level investment positions, resulting in the highest level of investment staffing in recent memory.

- Outside auditors, Macias, Gini & O'Connell, LLP, have rendered an unqualified (aka "clean") audit opinion on SFERS' basic financial statements for fiscal years ended

6/30/2011 and 6/30/2012.

- SFERS mailed our 1099Rs in late January. If you have questions, or need a copy, contact SFERS at (415) 487-7062.

Questions? Comments? Contact Herb at [herb.sf@gmail.com](mailto:herb.sf@gmail.com); Jean at [jeansthomas@yahoo.com](mailto:jeansthomas@yahoo.com), or (415) 665-4149; or Stephen at [Stephen.home@att.net](mailto:Stephen.home@att.net), or (415) 664-1201.

## ***The Bulletin***

**March 2013**

**Volume 113, Number 3**

Al Casciato, Editor

Sheila Mullen, Managing Editor

Office: (415) 681-5949

Fax: (415) 681-5398

Office e-mail: [reccsf@att.net](mailto:reccsf@att.net)

➔ **LOOK NOW AT YOUR MAILING LABEL.**  
The month posted on the label  
is the date your dues expire.



### **Regular Meeting**

**Wednesday, March 13**

United Irish Cultural Center,

45th Ave. & Sloat

### **Executive Board Meeting**

**Tuesday, March 19**

Taraval Police Station

The Bulletin (USPS 896-740) is published monthly except August for \$36 per year by the Retired Employees of the City and County of San Francisco, 3915 Irving St., San Francisco, CA 94122-1294. Periodicals Postage Paid at San Francisco, CA. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE BULLETIN, 3915 Irving St., San Francisco, CA 94122-1294.

### ***Note to members***

**Please keep RECCSF updated  
with changes in address,  
phone number and e-mail.**

*Letters to the Editor Welcome at  
[alcasciato@stisia.com](mailto:alcasciato@stisia.com) &  
[sheilamullen@mac.com](mailto:sheilamullen@mac.com)*

### ***The Bulletin***

#### **April Deadline:**

• Friday, March 15  
5:30 p.m.

Please e-mail your articles to:  
[alcasciato@stisia.com](mailto:alcasciato@stisia.com) &  
[sheilamullen@mac.com](mailto:sheilamullen@mac.com)

**Visit our Web site:**

***[sfretirees.org](http://sfretirees.org)***

**RECCSF office**

**e-mail address:**

***[reccsf@att.net](mailto:reccsf@att.net)***

# **Welcome, New Retirees**

## **Upcoming General Membership Meeting**

**Wednesday, March 13**

**San Francisco Employees Retirement System Executive Director  
Jay Huish will bring us up to date on the status of the pension  
fund, and other issues of critical interest to city retirees.**

***This meeting is a "must attend" for RECCSF members!***

### **Regular Meetings**

**Second Wednesday of each month**

Refreshments available: 11:10 – 11:50 a.m. • Program: 11:30 a.m. • Business meeting: noon • Bingo: 12:45 p.m.

United Irish Cultural Center, 45th Ave. & Sloat Blvd.