



THE BULLETIN

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

President's Message

By Sue Blomberg, President

Changes!

By early November, the government shutdown and debt ceiling crisis will have been resolved, the election will be over, preparations will be underway for Thanksgiving, and many people will be very aware of just how close we are to Christmas, Hannukah, and Kwanzaa.

Changes!

I started October with a two-week vacation at Lake Tahoe—had a great time, and felt very relaxed, although all the changes that were to be made to the house haven't yet been completed.

Changes!

I was away for the October general membership meeting, so I didn't have to experience the *major* difficulties encountered because, due to a large post-funeral reception, the Irish Cultural Center moved us from our regular meeting room to a very tiny, dark room; the Health Fair vendors and all the equipment needed for our meetings had to be totally rearranged.

I was informed that many people are to be thanked and congratulated for lending assistance in accomplishing the change, starting with Mary Anne McGuire-Hickey, who spearheaded the effort. Others who participated include: Tim O'Brien; Leo Martinez; Hellmund



Wong and his wife; Josephine Healy, Pat D'Arcy, Carol Cochran, Al Casciato (who officiated at the meeting); and Margaret O'Sullivan of HSS (who kept track of the vendors and let them know in advance of the change of venue). Please remember to thank these folks the next time you see them.

Changes!

My message is short this month. We have a great deal of important items to fit into the available space, so I'm "donating" part of mine. I look forward to sharing more information and thoughts in the *Bulletin* December issue, wherein we will also publish the name of the winner of *The Bulletin* Renaming Contest.

November 2013 Calendar

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, Nov. 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, Nov. 19, 9 a.m.
 Taraval Police Station
 All interested parties welcome.

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

Public Meetings:

Retired Firemen & Widows Association
 Thursday, Nov. 21, 1 p.m.
 Irish Cultural Center,
 45th Ave. & Sloat Blvd.

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

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

Health Service System
 Thursday, Nov. 14, 1 p.m.
 City Hall, Room 416

UESF Retired Division
 For time/location, contact
 Diane Doe at (415) 822-2099
 Ddoe@mac.com

SEIU 1021 West Bay Retirees Chapter
 Monday, Nov. 18, Noon-2 p.m.
 Union Hall, 350 Rhode Island St.,
 100 South Bldg.
 Claire Zvanski at (415) 341-3085 or
 czvanski@hotmail.com

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Travel Committee Report

By Beverly Pardini and
Marylou Allen

Friday, Nov. 1

Visit to High Hill Ranch in Apple Hill area, just east of Placerville; enjoy lunch while you also observe bushels of apples being peeled and prepared. Visit arts and crafts booths while you stroll the grounds.

Wed.-Fri. Nov. 27-29

Two nights at the Silver Legacy in downtown Reno; includes roundtrip motor coach transportation from the Bay Area, a bountiful Thanksgiving dinner, and casino visits.

Thur., Dec. 5

Visit to the Graton Resort & Casino, opening on Nov. 5. Casino features 3,000 slots, 144 table games, and 13 restaurants.

Mon.-Wed., Dec. 16-18

Ice Fantasy—where Cirque meets Ice, is this year's holiday presentation in the El Dorado's Showroom. Included: roundtrip motor coach transportation, two nights at the Silver Legacy, casino visits, a welcoming hosted cocktail party and dinner before the show.

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

Useful Phone Numbers

S.F. Retirement System
Web site: www.sfgov.org/sfers
Phone Numbers:
(415) 487-7000 • (888) 849-0777
Health Service System
Web site: www.myhss.org
Phone Numbers:
(415) 554-1750 • (800) 541-2266
Phone Hours for both:
8:00 a.m. to 5 p.m.

New Members

John Farrell	ACR	Stephen La Plante	ECD
Joe Giammattei	REC	Mike Angel Rodriguez	PUC
Susan Giammattei	REC	Teresa K. Wong	HRD

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.

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 per year.

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
sheilamullen@mac.com

Sheila Mullen, 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.

James P. Derbin	DPH	Dale F. Pombo	PUC
Joseph Engler	POL	Frank J. Rafferty	POL
Joseph W. Miles	GEN	Alcie N. Wilson	DPH
Cornelius Murphy	POL		

Health Service Committee Report

By Rosemary Passantino,
Communications Manager,
Health Service System

Federal Healthcare Reform and Retiree Health Benefits

Key provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) take effect for the first time in 2014. The main goal of this federal law, which passed in 2010, is to provide health insurance for over 30 million Americans who are currently uninsured or underinsured.

Beginning in 2014, medical plans cannot deny coverage or charge higher premiums due to a pre-existing condition. This is called "guaranteed issue." In addition, the "individual mandate" dictates that legal U.S. residents must purchase health insurance or pay a penalty. To assist people in obtaining coverage, each state has opened a government-run marketplace. (In California, this marketplace is Covered California.)

Based on income, some people who purchase coverage from a state marketplace may qualify for federal subsidies to help pay premiums and out-of-pocket costs.

A retiree who has employer-sponsored, Medicare-coordinated coverage through the Health Service System does not need to take any action relating to healthcare reform. Individuals eligible for Medicare, Veterans Benefits or Medicaid cannot purchase insurance from a state marketplace, and are not eligible for federal healthcare reform subsidies.

Retirees and dependents not eligible for Medicare, Veterans Benefits or Medicaid may consider purchasing insurance through a state marketplace. For example, non-Medicare eligible HSS retirees who can only enroll in City Plan because of where they live will have a variety of plan choices through their state insurance exchange. Also, it is possible to split a family. A retiree may remain enrolled

in HSS coverage while a dependent—such as a spouse, partner or child—obtains coverage through a state marketplace. Individuals who shop on a health insurance marketplace should carefully consider the range of medical services covered, as well as the premiums, deductibles and co-pays they must pay with a state marketplace plan.

Finally, retirees should be cautious about fraud. Do not give personal information to a caller who claims to be a federal worker administering healthcare reform, or who advises that you need a new Medicare card due to healthcare reform. Also, if you are reviewing state marketplace options, be very careful to use only official government Web sites and phone numbers. Scam artists have set up fake Web sites that resemble state insurance marketplaces.

For further information: In California, visit coveredca.com or call 1 (800) 300-1506; outside of California, visit healthcare.gov or call 1 (800) 318-2596.

Special Program for Holiday Party

By Stephanie Lyons, Program Chair

The holiday party used to feature live music. Over the years, the entertainment slipped away. This year will be different!

The Bay Area is fortunate to have many talented musicians who play the music of their heritage and culture. I am pleased to announce that we will have a wonderful group of musicians who play primarily Irish tunes, but who will also play us some sing-along carols. Deanne Donnellan, who plays flute and whistle, is coordinating a group that will also include a guitarist, mandolin player, a fiddler, and a bodhran (drum) player.

It seemed fitting to invite Deanne and her talented friends, since we meet in the Irish Cultural Center and have so many members of Irish heritage.

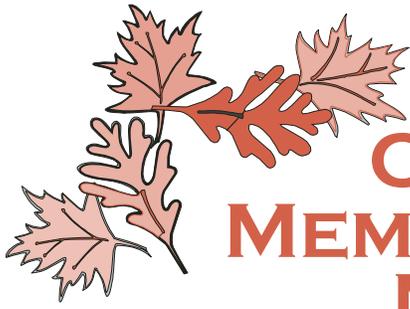
So, you might consider wearing green as well as red for the holiday party. I hope everyone enjoys a return to this RECCSF tradition.

We might even push aside some tables and chairs and make good use of the dance floor!



Fall Hours for RECCSF Office

Office Manager Reyna Kuk
will be staffing the office
Monday through Friday,
from 3 to 6 p.m.



OCTOBER MEMBERSHIP MEETING



Member Betty Eckmann with Kaiser rep. Lucy Corona.



Members Jim McCoy and Claire Zvanski with VSP rep. Nancy Fu.



RECCSF First Vice President Al Casciato filled in as m/c for vacationing President Sue Blomberg.



Delta Dental rep. Lynn King with member Adlai Jew.



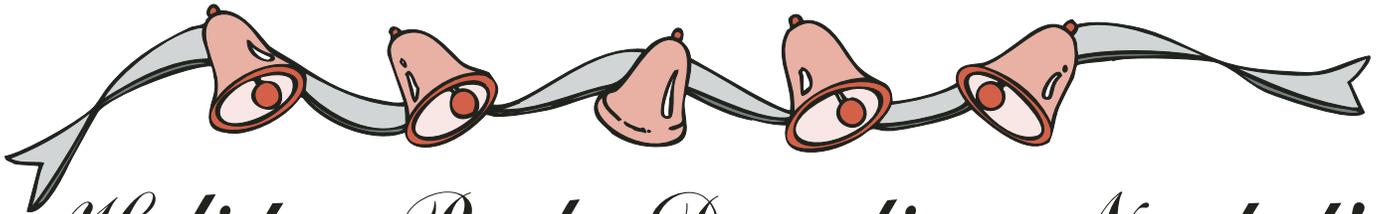
Member Stephen Herold with Jennifer Morgan, United Health Care rep.



Member Evelyn Bennett (standing) with Blue Shield reps. Charles Lee and Adam Guenther.



Many thanks to HSS Health Fair coordinators! (From left) Margaret O'Sullivan and Latasha Collins.



Holiday Party Donations Needed!

RECCSF is seeking donations for our Dec. 11 annual holiday party raffle.

“Cash is king,” but donated items are also welcome.

If you can help, please leave a message for Sue Blomberg at the office: reccsf@att.net or (415) 681-5949.

See’s Candy Gift Certificates

RECCSF is taking orders for See’s Candy one-pound gift certificates at the discounted price of \$16 each. Order by mail, or at the Nov. 13 general membership meeting.

Certificates will be distributed at the Dec. 11 Holiday Party.

If you wish your certificate(s) mailed to you, please check the box below, include 10¢ per certificate in your check, and make sure to write your address on the order form. Do not send an envelope—we can’t use them to mail the certificates. Certificates not being mailed will be available at the Dec. 11 Holiday Party.

We do not order actual boxes of candy—only gift certificates.

All orders must be received by Dec. 4, and accompanied by a check. NO EXCEPTIONS!

Questions?

Contact RECCSF Office Manager Reyna Kuk at reccsf@att.net or (415) 681-5949.

See’s Candy Order Form (Please print!)

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Number of **one-pound certificates**: _____ @ \$16.00 per certificate
= \$ _____

Attached is my check payable to RECCSF, in the amount of \$ _____

Mail order form and check to: RECCSF, 3915 Irving Street, San Francisco, CA 94122
ATTN: See’s Candy

Please mail my certificates to the address below.
I have included 10¢ per certificate in my check.

Street address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Retirement Committee Report

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

Plan Performance

As of 9/30/2013, Plan value is at an all-time high of \$17.7B—up from \$16.9B as of 7/1/2013—with three-month fiscal year-to-date earnings of 5.8%. Equities, about 53% of total Plan value, continue to be star performers at 9% return, with internationals leading the parade at 11%. All asset classes are positive earners except the infamous currency overlay program, discussed in our October column, which has lost \$61.3M since its inception in 2005. The latest development with currency overlay: Staff terminated **FX Concepts**, one of the two money managers in SFERS' program, in September, and the Board ratified the termination at its 10/9/2013 meeting. SFERS was FX Concepts' last remaining client. *Commissioner Herb Meiburger has, several times, pointed out errors in currency overlay performance data presented to SFERS; he therefore asks that SFERS Investment Division staff do their own, independent investigation of this program.*

Fossil Fuel Controversy/Global Warming

Present at the 10/9/2013 Board meeting was a lively and varied group, speaking in public comment about encroaching global warming and urging SFERS to divest of fossil fuel holdings. This fossil fuel issue was calendared as a follow-up to the April 2013 Board of Supervisors' unanimously-passed resolution: that SFERS cease additional fossil fuel investments *now* and divest of existing fossil fuel holdings over the next five years. Staff's analysis as of 8/31/2013 shows that SFERS has over 125 individual fossil fuel holdings, totaling \$532M or about 3.1% of total Plan assets.

Although many board members believe that global warming is a serious issue, none spoke in favor of divestment. Moreover, board members differed as to whether SFERS

should move aggressively or slowly against fossil fuels, as outlined within SFERS' Social Investment Policy's Levels I and II guidelines. (Level I is primarily analysis and study; Level II is proactive advocacy.) After lengthy discussion, the Board directed staff to come back expeditiously with the following information: fossil fuel companies' efforts/plans to develop green energy; evaluation of alternative energy opportunities, including green energy-dedicated investment consulting firms; and economic ef-

fects on the Plan of re-investment (example: inflationary effects).

The Retiree Health Care Trust Fund Board has asked SFERS to invest its assets—estimated at \$21M+—alongside SFERS' investment portfolio. SFERS Board action on this is slated for its 11/13/2013 meeting.

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

Protect Our Benefits

By Sharon Johnson

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 are those of the author.

Writ of Mandate

When POB first decided to move forward in the Supplemental COLA lawsuit, challenging the validity of Proposition C in 2011 limiting supplemental COLAs for city retirees now and in the future, POB knew taking this case to court would not be simple. No matter how accomplished our legal team is, we did not expect a swift or inexpensive ruling to our case. Now that the San Francisco Superior Court has ruled in favor of the City, and, following a meeting with the POB legal team, the committee unanimously voted to move forward to the appellate court. This process could take between six months to a year. Stay tuned!

Your continuing contributions toward financing the lawsuit are greatly appreciated. **Please make your check payable to: Protect Our Benefits, (POB), P.O. Box 320057, San Francisco, CA 94132.** Your donation is not tax deductible under federal or state law.

Pension Funds, in general

In the Oct. 11, 2013 *San Francisco Chronicle* Opinion Section there was an—not surprising, but eye-opening—essay on pension funds by David Sirota and Matt Tiabbi, "**The Myths Behind Public-employee Pension Funds.**" To put it briefly, *the idea that pension funds are causing fiscal crisis in our states is almost a fabrication crafted by a few people who actually cause the problem.* The article is a reminder of the necessity to remain astutely aware of the strategies being used to sway the public against our earned defined benefit pensions. They, the 1%, make up ways to name retired municipal employees as the cause of the economic woes within cities and states. It is another form of "Divide and Conquer," which is prevalent in our society. Anger and Bitterness prevail—municipal employees and retirees, the enemy.

Protect Our Benefits is one of the most active political action committees defending San Francisco retirees' pension and healthcare benefits. With your support, POB remains crucial in its participation impacting our future earned benefits.

For further information, please feel free to contact me at sharon-pearl42@gmail.com.

OPINION PIECE

Vote “No” on Proposition A

By Jean S. Thomas, Retired Accountant/Auditor

Proposition A's dramatic changes to the existing, pre-fully funded expenditure rules of the Retirees' Health Care Trust Fund *open the door to rampant raiding.*

How? Prop A allows the employer to *take*—not borrow—money from the trust to pay *current* retiree health care costs, rather than allowing the trust to accumulate earnings toward full funding. This doesn't cause *legal* problems; money is merely reclassified to *current*—rather than *future*—retiree health care costs.

So, what's the problem? Recall that, until full funding, the general fund pays current retiree health care costs as “pay-as-you-go.” So, if the trust “honey pot” relieves the general fund of these health care costs, “savings” appear in the general fund that politicians can divert to whatever they want.

How much can be taken? Any amount. See Sec. A8.432(d)(3). (Read it in your ballot materials: short and clear.) Sec. A8.432(d)(3) says that “different limitations” (on the amount taken) may apply. But, no meaningful descriptive guidelines exist for “different limitations.”

When can it be taken? Any time. Some Prop A proponents say, “for fiscal emergency situations.” But Prop A says nothing about “when,” at all!

Who approves the “take?” Initiated by the City controller, the recommendation goes to the mayor, board of supervisors, and trust fund board. Employees are excluded from this process, even though new hires contribute 2% of salary to the trust and the employer contributes only 1%.

Questions? Contact Jeanstomas@yahoo.com or (415) 665-4149.

San Francisco Retirees Support Proposition A!

The following language, taken from the voters' pamphlet, is an argument supporting a “Yes” vote on Proposition A. The argument was funded by Protect Our Benefits (POB) and the “Yes on Proposition A” organizations.

Most retirees live on fixed incomes, struggling to make ends meet. We depend on the commitment made to us by the City to provide health care.

Without that commitment and our health care, many would be forced to choose between paying for critical medication or to see their doctor, or putting food on the table, or keeping a roof over their head; choices no one should ever have to make.

Proposition A secures critical health care for San Francisco's retired workers, while protecting the City of San Francisco's financial health.

Proposition A is a win-win for everyone.

Sue Blomberg, President of Retired Employees of the City and County of San Francisco

OPINION PIECE

Vote “Yes” on Proposition “A”

By Herbert Weiner

As a member of POB, I met with Mark Farrell and other members to hear his proposal.

While I am not a lawyer or legislator, I believe that Proposition A will protect the San Francisco Retirement Healthcare Trust Fund against the threat of a raid by City Hall. Currently, there are no protections against early disbursements.

I know that POB President Larry Barsetti and Claire Zvanski conferred for many hours with Supervisor Farrell to clarify all aspects of this proposal before presenting it to the membership.

This measure might not be absolutely perfect, but we know that there is nothing to prevent others from submitting future charter amendments making further changes to the Trust Fund. The immediate threat of pillaging this fund is protected against under Proposition A.

There are those protesting what they perceive as gaps and weaknesses of the measure. In my opinion, protection against an immediate threat is preferable to no protection at all.

Proposition A should be supported with the aim of building safeguards in the future.

Vote “Yes” on Proposition A!

(Charter Amendment on the November ballot that secures and protects current and future retirees' vested interests in the realization and permanence of the Retiree Healthcare Trust Fund.)

Following the recommendation of the RECCSF Executive Board, the membership voted in support of Proposition A at its Sept. 11 general membership meeting.

The Bulletin
November 2013
Volume 114, Number 10

Sheila Mullen, Editor

Office: (415) 681-5949

Fax: (415) 681-5398

Office e-mail: reccsf@att.net

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



Regular Meeting

Wednesday, Nov. 13

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

Executive Board Meeting

Next meeting

Tuesday, Nov. 19, 2013

Taraval Police Station
2345-24th Ave.
San Francisco

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Note to members

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

Letters to the Editor welcome at
sheilamullen@mac.com

The Bulletin

October Deadline:

☛ Friday, Nov. 15
5:30 p.m.

Please e-mail your articles to:
sheilamullen@mac.com

Visit our Web site:

sfretirees.org

RECCSF office

e-mail address:

reccsf@att.net

Welcome, New Retirees

Upcoming General Membership Meetings

Wednesday, Nov. 13

Gary Holloway will make good on his promise to come and tell us all about *San Francisco history*, from the Gold Rush to the Earthquake and Fire of 1906.

If you missed his talk in February, you can catch up at this meeting.

Wednesday, Dec. 11

Our Annual Holiday Party will find us at our holiday party best. This year, we have a very special entertainment prepared for everyone to enjoy! As usual, we will host our special raffle.

See the article on Page 3 for entertainment details.

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.