



NEWS & VIEWS

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

President's Message

By Sue Blomberg, President

Happy St. Patrick's Day to everyone! It's one of those holidays we all celebrate, whether or not we're actually Irish; also, Cinco de Mayo, when we all drink Margaritas and eat enchiladas and celebrate all things Mexican, and Valentine's Day, when each one of us celebrates love, whether it's for a spouse/significant other, best friend, or someone you secretly admire. It's nice to have these special occasions interrupt our normal routines for a brief period of time—varying one's routine often inspires new energy.

As of this writing, the 2014 Winter Olympics are underway in Sochi, Russia. As you probably know from previous Olympic years, I'm an Olympics junkie. Curling: Who knew a household task could become a sport? And, at some point during the broadcasts, a question always gets asked: What prompts these athletes to drive themselves as they do? I am in total awe of a woman who voluntarily throws herself on a very tiny sled and flies headfirst down a track of pure ice; or a man who repeatedly practices jumps and runs to compete with an oversized



skateboard strapped to his feet; or—I could go on and on. What *is it* that feeds these people's passions to perform at their very best?

I have mentioned before that I have never had a passion of that level for any activity in my life. There are many things I like to do, but none for which I would give up part of my life to perfect.

I was a Cubmaster for ten years (yes, Cubmaster and not Den Leader). The Cub Scout motto is, "Do Your Best." Most of my adult life I have adopted that idea as a mantra for how I

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March 2014 Calendar

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, March 12
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.

News & Views

Editorial Committee Meeting

Tuesday, March 18, 9 a.m.
Taraval Police Station
All interested parties welcome.

Executive Board Meeting

Tuesday, March 18, 10 a.m.
Taraval Police Station
All interested parties welcome.

Public Meetings:

Retired Firemen & Widows Association

Thursday, March 20, 1 p.m.
Irish Cultural Center,
45th Ave. & Sloat Blvd.

Veteran Police Officers

Tuesday, March 11, 11 a.m.
Pacific Rod & Gun Club,
520 John Muir Dr., at Lake Merced

Retirement System

Wednesday, March 12, 2 p.m.
30 Van Ness, Suite 3000

Health Service System

Thursday, March 13, 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, March 17, Noon-2 p.m.
Union Hall, 350 Rhode Island St.,
100 South Bldg.
Claire Zvanski at (415) 341-3085 or
czvanski@hotmail.com

In This Issue

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New Members

George Georgeades REC
James G. Strickler CCS

Winter Hours for RECCSF Office

Effective immediately, Office Manager Reyna Kuk will be staffing the office Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, 9 a.m. to 12 noon; and Wednesdays, 3 to 6 p.m.

President's Message

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perform my responsibilities; not *your* best—or what you think my best should be—but *my* best.

I think that Olympic athletes have carried that same mantra to heights beyond my comprehension. The concept of “faster, higher, stronger” is each one’s attempt to fulfill his or her passion, regardless of the required time, energy and determination. My responsibility is to recognize and applaud their efforts—which I do whole-heartedly.

Men can read smaller print than women can; women can hear better.

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 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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.

News & Views is the publication of the Retired Employees of the City & County of San Francisco, Inc., a nonprofit organization. *News & Views* is published to express the policies, ideals and accomplishments of the organization. Nothing shall be published herein that is racist, sexist or ageist, or that is derogatory toward religious beliefs and other personal issues; nor shall be published anything in violation of Article VII, Section 1 of the RECCSF Constitution. Editorial contributions from individuals, organizations, and groups other than RECCSF and its members may be included in *News & Views* only upon the approval of the Editorial Committee. Subscriptions to *News & Views* are available for \$36 per year.

Submissions to *News & Views* are solicited and encouraged, and should be submitted to:

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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.

Irene J. Ammons	DPH	Ming D. Koo	DPW
Arthur S. Becker	PTC	Donna L. McCormick	DSS
Robert E. Buckley	ASR	Frank R. McKee	POL
Emma L. Chambers	DPH	Thelma Mihaly	REG
Ellen M. Chase	CSM	Mazie G. Miller	BOE
Winifred M. Davis	POL	John L. Mullan	AIR
Phyllis G. Devich	BOE	Charles Penman	BOE
Alexander S. Fadeff	DPW	Eileen Pulizzano	FIR
Richard J. Ganley	DPH	Ray W. Sanders	DPH
Myrtis L. Garner	BOE	Grace M. Selby	DPW
Kenneth Hall	CON	Robert B. Tayler	FIR
Glenn M. Hardin	POL	Ronald T. Taylor	FIR
Fred E. Holt	DPT	Rosalie M. Thomas	DPW
Marie L. Jackson	USD	Leslie Valdez	DPH
Ella R. Jamerson	CRT	George A. Wertheim	CON

Health Service Committee Report

By Claire Zvanski

The great news seems to be that many HSS members must be quite healthy! The annual **Rates and Benefits** process for plan year 2015 began with that encouraging news, mostly for City Plan. The Aon Hewitt actuary was very clear about the experience, claims, and loss ratio hitting an historic low as of Dec. 31; so, he is projecting that premiums for the City Plan will be lowered for plan year 2015. This also included the early retiree and active member categories.

Retiree dental plan design and cost alternatives were a major focus of discussion. However, there are a number of confusing terms being used, so it was pointed out by Commissioner Breslin that all dentist categories must be defined for members when the survey is sent out. **All retirees** will receive a survey in the near future regarding retiree dental benefit

options. Because retiree dental is not an employer-sponsored benefit (change requires a charter amendment), it is important to know that 99 cents of every premium dollar is spent on claims.

HMO options will remain with fixed co-pays and fixed panels of available dentists. The terms to consider carefully are PPO, Premier, and non-participating (not a Delta dentist). The Delta Dental PPO option has a very limited dentist network. Most Delta dentists are in the Premier category. Make certain you know into which category your dentist fits. The last, and most expensive category, are dentists who are not Delta Dental members so that your benefit is processed at 50% of usual and customary rates. It was also noted that CCSF retirees underutilize diagnostic and preventive services compared to Delta Dental's overall retiree data.

It will be very important for each of you to have a discussion

with your dentist to determine how any benefit change would impact you financially. Are you willing to change dentists just to get a better financial option, or do you prefer to keep your dentist?

The mayor's budget instructions require 2.5% reductions over two years, despite no deficit. However, no City department monitors as many contracts as HSS with fewer than three contract staff, and no City department directly serves over 108,000 individuals with fewer than 40 staff.

In February, the **Wellness Center** opened on the first floor for all members; the EAP is also centered there. HSS is scheduled to move to the third floor at the end of March.

Questions? Comments? Contact Health Service Committee Chair Ray Mason at (650) 344-1506, or Claire Zvanski at (415) 341-3805 or czvanski@gmail.com.

Important Announcement from your RECCSF Executive Board

All members please take note.

The Executive Board has decided that it is time for RECCSF to follow the lead taken by other organizations into the electronic age.

To that end, commencing with the July/August issue, our *News & Views* newsletter will be delivered **only** by e-mail. By implementing this policy, we will be able to direct the resulting fiscal savings toward improved outreach and member services. We will also be able to deliver timely alerts to members on critical issues that arise between newsletters.

However, we know that some members do not have computer access, and will still need to receive their printed copy. If this is your circumstance, please mail a note requesting

a hard copy of the newsletter to the RECCSF Office, 3915 Irving St., San Francisco, CA 94122-1294.

If you are currently receiving the hard copy and also have an e-mail address that we don't know about, please e-mail it to the RECCSF office at reccsf@att.net, so that we can ensure a smooth transition.

We also wish to thank all of our members for ongoing support of all of our efforts to ensure our fiscal health, such as participation in our raffles and the voluntary donations at the refreshment table. Also, we wish to remind you that any direct donations made to the Friends of RECCSF are most appreciated.

FEBRUARY MEMBERSHIP MEETING



New Deferred Compensation Team: from left: Joe Collins, Prudential; Mary Ann McGregor, Retirement System; Chad Kasper, Prudential.



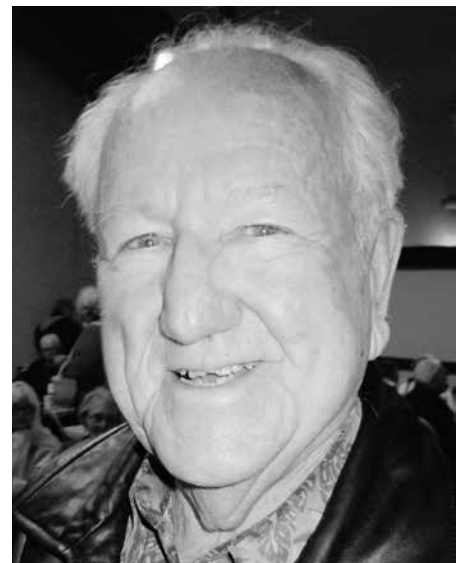
Speaker Claudia Reinhart was introduced by friend and past RECCSF President Stephanie Lyons.



Speaker Claudia Reinhart, Recreation and Parks Department, gave an interesting presentation on senior and family programs; the highlight was a report on senior week at Camp Mather.



New member Sandra Hirzel, DPW. Welcome!



Nice to see member Stan Cordes, attending after a long absence.



(From left) Rear: Froilan De Guzman, John Stenson. Front: Willie Delizo, Eli Calimquim, George Lau.



Rear: Clark and Barbara Jonas. Front, from left: Emma Pennebaker, Mary Poole.

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 writer.

Gerry Meister, In Remembrance

This article is dedicated to Gerry Meister, in remembrance of her passing on March 4, 2013. As a retired 40-year high school teacher, and advocate on behalf of teachers, both active and retired—as well as **all** city retirees—it is befitting to take pause to appreciate her contributions on protecting our benefits.

Writ of Mandate

The POB legal team has notified us that they have completed the process of preparing the official record of the legal proceedings in the Superior Court action.

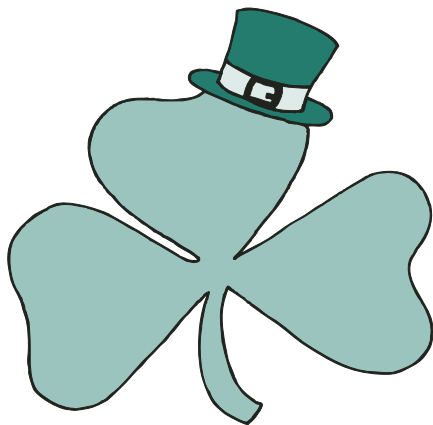
According to our attorneys, the heart of our case is that subdivision (d) in Proposition C is in conflict with—and violates—the charter language that requires that the “reserve fund” for the supplemental COLA be based on those annual earnings in excess of the amount established by the retirement system as the “expected” annual earnings. The formula in subdivision (d) changes the language to the retirement system being “fully funded on the market value of the fund” before the supplemental COLA can be paid. **This is not a minor change** because the actuarial reports show that the retirement system won’t be “fully funded” for several years, even though the earnings have exceeded the expected rate of return. The intention of the promoters of subdivision (d) is to “limit” or “stop” the supplemental COLAs for several years. Each annual COLA is compounded, so missing even one supplemental COLA effec-

tively reduces retirees’ pensions permanently by 1% or 1.5%. In 1996, voters voted in support of supplemental COLAs. **With the rising costs of living over the years, the entitled adjusted COLAs have kept our needed living fundamentals secure.**

The opening brief is due in early March, 2014. POB is coordinating amicus briefs with VPOA and Retired Firefighters. It hoped that RECCSF—by the time we go to print—will have joined with us.

POB thanks you for your ongoing spirited and generous support as we remain focused on guarding our future earned benefits with the City’s leadership. For latest updates, visit <http://protectourbenefits.org>.

Please help to support this effort of protecting your financial future. Mail your donation today to POB, P.O. box 320057, San Francisco, CA 94132. Thank you!



Happy
St. Patrick's
Day

Travel Committee Report

By Beverly Pardini and Marylou Allen

Thur.-Fri., April 3-4

Enjoy Monterey Bay Aquarium visit, then ride through Big Sur to San Simeon; one-night stay at Best Western Plus Cavalier with included dinner before leisurely walk along beach; breakfast next morning included before traveling to Hearst Castle for Grand Rooms.

Wed.-Fri., May 14-16

Spend two nights at the cozy Carson Valley Inn in Minden, Nevada; next day, a tour of the Nevada State Museum in Carson

City (formally the Carson City Mint). Included: picnic lunch in the historic town of Genoa and Basque dinner in Gardnerville.

Wed.-Fri., June 18-20

After 75 years in the same family, the Nugget in Sparks has changed hands, and features new renovations. Spend two nights in the Nugget’s East Tower and visit other casinos while in Reno; also, enjoy the Nugget’s indoor swimming pool and spa.

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

Retirement Committee Report

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

It's official: The 2% Basic COLA is ours next fiscal year!

At its 2/12/14 meeting, the full SFERS Board approved the 2% inflation-based cost-of-living increase for all Miscellaneous and New Safety retirees, effective July 1, 2014, and throughout fiscal year (FY) 2014-15. An extra 1% will be added to our COLA "banks." Eligible members can calculate their Basic COLA monthly benefit by multiplying their 6/30/2014 gross monthly benefit by 2% (.02). ("New" Safety members are retired police and fire hired on or after 11/2/1976. "Old" Safety members don't receive this COLA; they should contact their professional organizations for retirement benefit details.)

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 (CPI). The percentage increase from December 2012 to December 2013 was 2.58%, or 3% when rounded to the nearest full percent. The maximum annual Basic COLA increase is 2%; any

excess inflation percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent and are added to our individual COLA banks. The banks accumulate over time; amounts are withdrawn and added to our monthly checks when CPIs are under 2%. The SFERS' schedule, *COLA Bank, Excess Accumulated CPI Increases as of July 1, 2014*, shows the dramatic decline in CPIs in recent years. For example, as of 7/1/2014, those who retired 7/2/2001-7/1/2007 have 4% COLA banks; those who retired 7/2/2007-7/1/2010, only 3%; those who retired 7/2/2012-7/1/2013, a measly 1%.

Plan performance

Because of general market declines, Plan value and fiscal year-to-date (FYTD) earnings decreased last month. Plan Value as of 1/31/2014 was \$18.3B, down from \$18.7B as of 12/31/2013; and FYTD earnings as of 1/31/2014 were 9.4%, down from 11% as of 12/31/2013. Nevertheless, FYTD 1/31/2014 earnings still greatly exceed the 7.58% actuarial return assumption (earnings goal) for the entire fiscal year.

The new Chief Investment Officer (CIO), William J. Coaker, Jr.—or Bill Coaker, as he refers to himself—presided as CIO for the first time at the Board's

2/12/2014 meeting. As stated in February's column, Coaker is not new to SFERS' investment division; he was an SFERS senior investment officer from 2005 to 2008, then left to become manager of public equities at the University of California, where he implemented a highly profitable investment strategy called *Alternative Equity*. (Coaker reports that the University of California's Alternative Equity strategy yielded 11.29% over the portfolio's benchmark in the first year of operation.) Although SFERS' investment practices have been good, Coaker believes they can be improved to meet the increasingly difficult market conditions ahead. For example, Coaker clearly showed that SFERS' bond portfolio (25% of Plan assets) did not fulfill its traditional role as anchor during the 2008 recessionary period; instead, it declined 15.3%, while U.S. Treasury bonds earned 23%.

Other points of interest:

- SFERS issued 2013 Form 1099Rs in late January. If you don't have yours, call SFERS at (415) 487-7000 or (888) 849-0777 and ask for a duplicate. SFERS administration will process requests in a timely manner.
- The Retiree Health Care Trust Fund (RHCTF) Board has decided to invest its current \$40M assets in an independent investment vehicle "alongside" SFERS' trust assets. This independent vehicle will be comprised of publicly-traded equities and bonds only. RHCTF will have no management or investment selection authority, and SFERS will bill them for their services—such as staff time and

2014 RECCSF New Executive Board Election!

RECCSF is currently soliciting members to run for the Executive Board, either as board members or officers (president, secretary, five board members); terms are for two-year periods.

We encourage each member to consider enriching their RECCSF experience by serving in one of these capacities; and, for newcomers in particular, it's a great way to get to know your fellow members.

If interested, please contact Ray Mason at (650) 344-1506.

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Retirement Committee Report

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financial reporting. RHCTF will earn greater returns under this arrangement than with the city treasurer, where RHCTF funds earn only 1%. The arrangement is expected to be temporary, because the RHCTF Board plans to manage its own investments when assets reach about \$200M. If you have comments, please contact RHCTF elected commissioner Ed Walsh at walsh.retiree.health@gmail.com, or (415) 661-2786.

- SFERS' planned move in April to 1145 Market has run into problems with the Board of Supervisors' Budget and Finance Committee. Committee members and the budget analyst question SFERS' need for greater space. Stay tuned!
- Longstanding political and public attention to SFERS' fossil fuel investment policies continue. A special Board meeting on the subject—unfortunately, taking place after we go to press—has been called. We'll report results next month.

Questions? Comments? Contact Herb at herb.sf@gmail.com; Jean at jeansthomas@yahoo.com, or (415) 665-4149. Stephen is still on leave recuperating from a knee operation; we'll look forward to welcoming him back when he's fully recovered!

It was the accepted practice in Babylon 4,000 years ago that for a month after the wedding, the bride's father would supply his son-in-law with all the mead he could drink. Mead is a honey beer and because their calendar was lunar based, this period was called the honey month, which we know today as the honeymoon.

Reasons to Get a Mortgage Pre-approval

*By Casey Mysliwy,
Marketing Specialist*

Whether you're downsizing to a smaller home or condo, looking to purchase a second "getaway" home, or even taking that first step toward home ownership, get pre-approved for a mortgage before you hit the open houses.

Here's why a mortgage pre-approval is vital:

- **You'll find out how much house you can afford.** Your pre-approval paints an accurate picture of how much you can realistically borrow for your home. The process requires you to provide information about your income and assets, so the dollar figure you end up with is tailored to your situation.
- **You'll show home sellers you're serious.** Showing up with your pre-approval in hand tells real estate agents and sellers that you did your homework and came pre-

pared. This is something they'll keep in mind when you make an offer.

- **You'll gain an advantage over other prospective buyers.** In a fast-paced real estate market like the Bay Area's, you need time on your side to secure the home you want. Getting pre-approved early in the process allows you to act quickly once you've found your dream home. And when you're competing with other buyers, pre-approval helps you to stand out.

San Francisco Federal Credit Union can walk you through the mortgage pre-approval process and get you set up with a borrowing plan that fits your budget and preferences.

You can apply for pre-approval using our easy online application, available at SanFranciscoFCU.com. And with our current low rates on mortgage loans, it's a perfectly affordable time to buy.

Reminder to mark your calendars for the RECCSF June 4 Annual Luncheon And Installation of Officers!

Please note: This year's event will be held on the *first* Wednesday in June. Tickets are still \$30 and will be available by mail, or at both the April 9 and May 14 general membership meetings.

This year's luncheon is special, because we will be honoring retiring RECCSF President Sue Blomberg for her six years of dedicated service.

News & Views

March 2014

Volume 115, Number 3

Sheila Mullen, Editor

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



Regular Meeting

Wednesday, March 12

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

Executive Board Meeting

Tuesday, March 18

Taraval Police Station
2345-24th Ave.

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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

News & Views

March Deadline:

• Friday, March 14
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, March 12

Dealing with Elder Abuse

Karla Wilson, MSW, LCSW, Adult Protective Services in the Dept. of Aging and Adult Services, and Shirley Ledbetter, Protective Services worker, will describe their department, and discuss elder abuse prevention and treatment.

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.