

# The Official Monthly Publication of the Retired Employees of Alameda County, Inc. P.O. Box 302, Oakland, CA 94604



VOLUME 46 NUMBER 2 FEBRUARY 2024

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE — BY ALICIA BAPTISTA, PRESIDENT

2024 has arrived and with it are opportunities to socialize and exercise. Studies have shown that these two activities contribute to a long and healthy life so take advantage.

ur first Board Meeting of 2024 included three REAC members who are not Board Members in attendance. It was a pleasure to see them and to hear some of their experiences. Members are always welcome at Board Meetings. I have heard some say that they get the Newsletter too late to get the link to our meetings, however, the link does not change from month to month. Join us. I should also use this opportunity to remind you that if you choose to receive your REAC Newsletter electronically, you will receive it 2-3 weeks earlier than the paper copy. You can also easily increase the font size to make reading easier.

f you're looking for a chance to socialize with fellow retirees, consider REAC's Annual Meeting and Spring Luncheon which will take place on March 11, 2024. As you know by now, our bylaws require a minimum of twenty members in attendance at the Annual Meeting which will be called to order at 9:30am at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Pleasanton. The Spring Luncheon will take place at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting. Not only will you learn how we're doing at REAC, but you will be able to socialize with new and old friends, meet Board Members, enjoy a good meal, win gift cards, and receive useful information.

Please make sure that we receive your registration no later than March 1, 2024. I look forward to seeing you there.

ebruary brings another opportunity to socialize for many of us. Do you have a Valentine? If your Valentine likes candy, let me remind you that REAC Members receive a 10% discount on See's Candies at their outlet stores. In the East Bay, See's Outlet Stores are located at 3048 W. Jack London Boulevard, Livermore, and 2380 Monument Boulevard, Pleasant Hill. Simply ask for a Volume Savings Discount and show your REAC Membership Card.

've shared information on how REAC can help you socialize, but what about exercise? Linda Slater, our Health Officer, has discovered that Kaiser Permanente has partnered with Eastbay Regional Parks on a Trails Challenge. Read her article later in this Newsletter.

athy Foster has also written an article for you. She tells us that Ismael "Ish" Piña will retire at the end of January. Many of you know him because he has helped you with a question, an issue, or otherwise. Read Kathy's article to learn more about Ish. Congratulations to Ish. May he enjoy a long and healthy retirement.

inally, have you looked at our website lately? We continue to tweak it, so visit www.reacsite.org and give us feedback.

See you at the Annual Meeting and Spring Luncheon!

# REAC BOARD MEETINGS

February 12, 2024 (Monday) 9:30 AM Zoom ID 818 545 4951 password REAC

March 11, 2024 (Monday) 9:30 AM Zoom to be scheduled

http://reacsite.org reacwebsite@gmail.com

# ACERA TRUSTEES MEETINGS

February 15, 2024 (Thursday) 2:00 PM see ACERA.org for ID and password

March 21, 2024 (Thursday) 2:00 PM see ACERA.org for ID and password

www.acera.org

# Welcome New Members

Dorthea Bottom Connie Brunn Alisa Jackson Melinda Logwood Darrel Williams

# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, RETIRED EMPLOYEES OF ALAMEDA COUNTY, MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2024, 9:30 A.M.

Zoom Video Conferencing Board Meeting

A licia Baptista, President of the Board, called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM

ROLL CALL: Alicia Baptista, Dawn Stevenson, Liz Koppenhaver, Paul Reeves, Connie Land, Cynthia Baron, Kathy Foster, Linda Slater, and Marsha Rice were present. Mike Fara, ACERA Communications Manager, Charo Panesi-Guerra, REAC Member and Administrative Assistant, Pete Albert, ACRE President, Brenda Scott, member, James Lee, member, and Al Chavez, member were present.

MINUTES: Minutes of the December 11, 2023 REAC Board meeting were reviewed. Marsha Rice moved that the December 11, 2023, REAC Board Minutes be approved as submitted. Liz Koppenhaver seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

# Announcements &

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Alicia reported that she received a response from the member who was questioning the size of our bank balances. In his letter he also asked additional questions, one of which was questioning the font size used for the REAC News. He felt the font size was much too small, and therefore difficult to read. For those members who receive their Newsletter online, they can make it larger and therefore easier to read. For those members who receive the paper copy of the REAC News, they do not have that option. The only way to increase the font size for the paper copy would be to add additional pages. Additional discussion regarding this item needs to take place before any decisions are made.

He also suggested that we should consider presenting the Minutes in a more popular reader friendly format, which included summarizing, abbreviation, etc., and then keep the more detailed Minutes on the website. In the past the Board has talked about how the minutes are presented. The Minutes of each Board meeting should reflect, as accurately as possible, what is being said and what is being presented. Creating Minutes which are summarized, abbreviated etc. creates the potential for in accurate Minutes.

**ACERA:** Mike Fara, ACERA Communications Manager. There was no Retirees Committee meeting this month, but he decided to attend to our meeting in case we had additional questions or concerns. Brenda Scott, who was attending today's meeting, received a notice from Delta Dental, dated December 15, 2023, notifying her that Delta Dental learned of a Data Breach on June 1, 2023. They investigated the Data Breach on July 6, 2023, and determined the Data breach occurred from May 27, 2023 to May 30, 2023, and further, they determined that her personal information was affected. She wanted to know why it took so long to let her know that her information was affected by the Data Breach. They knew as early as June 1, 2023, yet they did not tell her until December 15, 2023. She called ACERA, and was told that ACERA knew of the Data Breach.

Mike reported that he was unaware of the Data Breach and he was very surprised that Delta Dental had not informed ACERA in a timely fashion. He will research what took place, when it took place, and why that information was not made available

to all concerned in a timely fashion. Brenda mentioned that she did hear back from ACERA, and they left her a phone message, explaining that they were aware of the Data Breach, and that Delta Dental offered to pay for a credit monitoring service if she wanted to use one. Kathy suggested that this is something that should be added to the ACERA website. Perhaps ACERA can write up what took place, why it took so long, and what ACERA is doing about it, and post that information on the ACERA website.

Kathy asked if VIA Benefits was considering creating an automatic reimbursement process for the Income-Related Monthly Amount (IRMA). If they agreed, would it be an automatic monthly reimbursement or a lump sum reimbursement? Mike stated that he was currently working on a letter regarding the issue, and hoped to have it completed soon. He will send Kathy a copy of the draft letter.

Cynthia asked if ACERA has created any information regarding the predesignation of active employees. Mike has drafted information regarding the change to the web content, and is just waiting to hear back from their Chief Counsel. They have also have completed a draft of the Pre-Filed Disability Application form which will allow members to use DocuSign to complete the process electronically.

Al Chavez mentioned the difficulty he experienced with VIA Benefits. He said that their phone application is not user friendly. He has a lot of experience navigating those types of applications, and the VIA Benefits phone application is very hard to use. Mike thanked him for his feedback and he will take that

information back to VIA Benefits to see if they are working on anything to update their app. Alicia asked Al if he would be able to send us some specific information regarding what types of problems he encounters when attempting to use the phone application. Al agreed to send both REAC and Mike the information. Jim Lee also mentioned that he agreed with Al. He felt trying to use the Via Benefits phone application was very confusing and very difficult to use.

Pete mentioned that a lot of information was given at the December 6, 2023 Retirees Committee meeting. One of the items was an ACERA report on researching the possibility of providing an additional \$1000 for hearing aids. It would probably require members to use VIA, since they cannot use Kaiser to access the reimbursement. Mike mentioned that it was one of the proposals discussed, but nothing was decided. It will be brought back at a later date for additional discussion.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Liz presented the December 2023 Treasurer's Report.

The total receipts were \$8,076.65 and the total disbursements were \$5,361.77. Disbursements included officer stipends, a payment to Select Staffing of \$177.67, and 1 payment of \$1,791.47 to Red Arrow printing. Red Arrow is still 2 months behind in their billing. Disbursements also included \$596.03 for USPS bulk mailing of our newsletter, a payment of \$600.00 to DoubleTree, as our deposit for the 2025 CRCEA Conference REAC will be hosting and \$524.05 for the D&O Luncheon at Trabocco in Alameda. There is also a \$600 Stipend payment which covers the gap between when Suman left and Liz took over as Treasurer and a reimbursement payment of \$351.80 for Liz, which is for expenses related to SACRS, Zoom, and IONOS. After all disbursements

were paid, REAC ended the month with a surplus of \$2,714.88.

Liz was also able to move the funds from the CD which matured on December 22, 2023 to an 11 month Credit Union CD at 4.15%.

Alicia mentioned that we are still having difficulties with Select Staffing regarding their invoices. She hopes to have Select Staffing correct their invoices so that we can pay them appropriately.

Connie moved that the December Treasurer's Report be approved as submitted. Kathy seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

The presentation of the Treasurer's 4th Quarter Report will be carried over and presented at the February REAC Board Meeting.

Liz presented the proposed 2024 Annual Budget for final approval. The 2024 Annual Budget accurately reflected the previously approved proposed 2024 Annual Budget. Liz reminded the Board that changes to the budget, once approved by the Board, can be made as we move forward in time. Alicia questioned the 15% raise for Membership and Clerical Support (Select Staffing). Since we have had continuous billing issues with Select Staffing, Liz felt it was difficult to anticipate more precise numbers. In addition, while Charo has been paid, she has been asked to take on additional functions which were previously done by other Board members or were not done and needed to be done. It seems likely, once the billing issues with Select Staffing are fixed, that 15% is a more appropriate number.

Connie reminded the Board, that when membership was given a COLA increase, the Board approved giving our Clerical Support the same increase. She also mentioned that most Employment agencies often increase their base charges each year, so a 15% increase in this situation, seems appropriate.

Paul moved that the 2024 REAC Annual Budget be approved as submitted. Marsha seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Liz presented the 2024 Monthly Stipend amounts for approval. There were no changes to the 2024 Monthly Stipend amounts. Kathy moved that the 2024 Monthly Stipend amounts be approved as submitted. Connie seconded the motion, and the motion was approved.

CRCEA (CALIFORNIA
RETIRED COUNTY EMPLOYEES
ASSOCIATION): Connie provided her
CRCEA report.

The January Executive Committee meeting will be held on January 24, 2024. Since this meeting is after REAC's meeting, the meeting highlights will be provided at the February Board meeting.

The Conference Brainstorming Subcommittee has not scheduled any meetings to discuss if the CRCEA Spring 2024 Conference will be hybrid, in person only, or virtual only.

REAC 2025 Fall Conference Planning Committee Update: The Planning Committee met on January 5, 2024. Items discussed were proposed conference timelines, identifying area hotels, and review of past conferences final expenses. The Planning Committee members plan to visit 3 area hotels in January and February, 2024. Once again, they are seeking someone who is comfortable with soliciting funds, which will be needed to help offset the costs associated with hosting the Conference. This committee meets monthly via Zoom.

**CALPERS LAWSUIT UPDATE:** There is no new information to report.

# SACRS (STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY RETIREMENT SYSTEMS):

Paul provided his SACRS report. There is not much new to report for SACRS. They have posted some additional information regarding their 2024 Spring Conference which will be held at the Hilton Santa Barbara Beachfront Resort. The Conference takes place from May 7-10, 2024. The Conference registration and Hotel reservations will be open in March 2024. At this point there is no information regarding topics. Paul plans on attending, and he will let everyone else who also wants to attend, know when the documents for attending are released.

**RETIREMENT BOARD:** No additional information was reported.

**INVESTMENT COMMITTEE:** There was no new information to report.

HEALTH CARE (CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION): Linda provided her Health Care report.

Kaiser and the East Bay Regional Parks Foundation are hosting the 2024 Trails Challenge. They will provide a 2024 Guidebook which contains a number of detailed trail maps for the Trail Challenge. The hikes will be for all levels of fitness from easy to challenging. It is designed to help people with their fitness. Linda will create a short write up for the Newsletter and send it to Dawn for review.

Linda also reminded everyone to get their Flu shots as well as their COVID-19 booster shots since there has been an uptick in the number of COVID-19 cases.

ACTIVITIES: Alicia reminded the Board that the REAC Annual Membership meeting and the REAC Spring Luncheon will be held on Monday, March 11, 2024, at the DoubleTree Hotel in Pleasanton. The Conference Committee, which includes Alicia, Dawn, and Charo, will be scheduling another committee meeting soon. Kathy mentioned that she did reach out to Kaiser regarding doing a presentation and is waiting for their response.

# MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT:

Charo reported that as of December 31, 2023, membership stood at 3,812 members which was the same as last month.

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE:** Paul gave the Nominating Committee report. The Nominating Committee, which included Kathy, Marsha,

and himself, were pleased to report that the three Board members whose terms were set to expire on March 31, 2024, were all willing to serve an additional term. The three members whose terms expire are Alicia, Dawn, and Linda. The REAC membership will cast their votes at the March 2024 Annual Membership meeting.

**REAC WEBSITE:** Connie provided an update on the Website Subcommittee. The Subcommittee, which includes Connie, Dawn, and Linda, met on December 27, 2023 and January 3, 2024. They identified pages which needed minor modifications and pages which needed reformatting. They wanted to make sure the font size was the same throughout the site, to make sure the information on the calendar was current, to remove outdated information and to add current information. They were concerned about the flow of information from the Subcommittee to the Website Designer. Paul mentioned that a number of the items which were identified as needing correction during the December 2023, have been corrected. Linda provided a Power Point presentation of the changes which the Subcommittee has made thus far. The Board was very pleased with all the work the Subcommittee. has done to improve and modernize the REAC Website. The Board asked Linda if she could send us the

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Power Point presentation so that we can review it and then send them our feedback. Linda agreed to send us the presentation.

Alicia mentioned that she thought the financial reports were sent to the web designer at the same time the Board Minutes and Board Agenda were sent. Paul explained that he only sent the Minutes and the Agenda for the next Board meeting to the web designer. He did not include the financial reports. After some additional discussion, the Board decided that Paul should continue to send the Minutes and the Agenda, plus send the financial reports. Any changes to the website, once approved, would be go through the Website Committee.

The possibility of including photos of REAC events on the REAC Website was discussed. There was some concern about confidentiality, suitability and what sort of review process would be required. It was also suggested that each photo, where possible, would be captioned. Additional discussions will take place before any final decisions are made.

REAC News: The REAC News will contain information on the REAC Annual Membership Meeting and Spring Luncheon, Linda's article about the Trail Challenge, and information about Ish Piña's retirement. Kathy will develop a brief article about Ish.

**OTHER REPORTS:** There was no additional information to report.

**OLD BUSINESS:** There was no additional information to report.

**New Business:** There was no additional information to report.

# FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER:

There was no additional information to report.

Meeting adjourned at: 11:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Paul Reeves, Board Secretary

#### **Next Meeting:**

Next Board Meeting: Monday, February 12, 2024, 9:30 am

Zoom Video Conferencing Board Meeting

ACERA reported in its December 2023 Performance Report that the fund had increased \$355,616,059. The total fund returned 3.55%. The value of the fund at the end of December was \$11,259,641,208.

Join the REAC Board meeting on the second Monday of the month at 9:30 am.

### **Zoom Meeting:**

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8185454951?pwd=dG1pTWNPMjhBMEtGQ0Y0aXNLaDdLUT09

Meeting ID: 818 545 4951

Passcode: REAC Dial by your location

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

Passcode: 529503
Find your local number:

https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kkPKWqn45

# Ish Pina

f you're a retiree who's been to an ACERA seminar, Health Fair or ever needed to call ACERA regarding a healthcare matter, you know who Ish Piña is. Ish started with the County in 1989 at the Highland Hospital Payroll Administration Department, and then went to Human Resources Labor Relations in 1996 before joining ACERA in 1999. Daily, Ish assists retirees and beneficiaries with any questions they have regarding health, dental and vision care. Retirees know him by name and Ish knows many of them by name. ACERA provides many benefits and it's not easy to

articulate how these benefits work, but Ish has always taken the time to listen to questions and go through one by one to ensure questions are answered. Years ago, Ish created ACERA's Medicare Transition Seminar, collaborating with Kaiser, to invite those turning 65 to learn about the enrollment to Medicare, their available options, and how the benefits work. He also arranged Wellness Walks around Lake Merritt in Oakland during Spring and Summer. The main event he was noted for was ACERA's Annual Health Fair. He was usually in costume as these were held at the end of October, adding an element of

fun and making everyone smile. He always took time to get to know the attendees as well as the vendors who attended and made sure retirees had all the information they needed available to them to make informed decisions. Ish has trained many of ACERA's team members and leaves his legacy with us as he himself now gets to transition into his retirement. REAC would like to congratulate Ish on his well-deserved retirement but more importantly thank him for the years of service and all the help he provided to our members, which was always with compassion and kindness.

Submitted by Kathy Foster

# IN MEMORIAM

In deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the following retirees:

#### ASERCION, Cecilia

Behavioral Health Care Services 11/22/2023

### BACALTOS, Racquel

General Services Agency 12/21/2023

#### BARNES, Carol

Library 11/16/2023

# BOND, Doryce

Assessor 11/25/2023

#### BROWN, Patricia

Public Health 11/24/2023

#### BURNS, Naomi

Human Resource Services 11/11/2023

#### CARPENTER, Christopher

District Attorney 12/16/2023

#### DONALDSON, Dorene

Alameda Health System 11/24/2023

#### FORD, Sadie

Probation 11/25/2023

#### GEER, Diane

Probation 11/30/2023

#### IACKSON, Genora

Social Services Agency 11/13/2023

#### MALLILLIN, Lydia

Assessor 11/19/2023

# MILLER, Laverne

Public Works Agency 11/21/2023

### MORRISON, Margaret

Behavioral Health Care Services 12/3/2023

### PETERS, Rose

Human Resource Services 12/2/2023

### RODRIGUEZ, Raymond

Social Services Agency 12/11/2023

#### SANTOS, Maria

Non-Mbr Survivor of Juan M. Cruz 12/10/2023

#### SELF, Fred D.

Social Services Agency 12/13/2023

### SILVA, Ernest

Public Works Agency 12/2/2023

#### SPRINGER, Josephine

Probation 11/30/2023

#### THOMAS, Joni

Alameda Health System 12/20/2023

#### TOUSON, Jessea

General Services Agency 12/13/2023

#### TOWNES, Betty

General Services Agency 11/16/2023

#### VELEZ, Manuel

Social Services Agency 12/12/2023

#### WOLFE, Christopher

Non-Mbr Survivor of Deborah Marie Wolfe 12/11/2023

#### YISRAEL, Caleb

Probation 11/28/2023

#### ZHANG, John

Public Health 12/22/2023

The surviving spouse of a member is eligible for REAC membership. To enroll, send an email to <a href="mailto:reacwebsite@gmail.com">reacwebsite@gmail.com</a>.

# COME TO THE REAC ANNUAL MEETING AND SPRING LUNCHEON MONDAY MARCH 11, 2024

9:30 am Annual Meeting 11:30 am–Banquet Room opens 12:15–Lunch is served DoubleTree by Hilton 7050 Johnson Drive, Pleasanton

Free Parking

6

March 1, 2024 is the deadline for reservations and no refunds will be given after this date.

Reservations must be made in advance. The form below can be sent

along with a check for \$20/\$40 per person **payable to REAC** to the following address:

REAC

P.O. Box 302

Oakland, CA 94604

Reservation Registration for REAC Spring Luncheon (Circle your selection: Chicken Marsala [C] or Tilapia [T])

Members (\$20)

Non-members (\$40)

Phone number / Email

 (+ 10)				
 _ C T		СТ		
 _ C T		СТ	Total # of people	Amount enclosed
 _ C T		СТ		\$



The Eastbay Regional Parks & Kaiser Permanente Presents

# TRAILS CHALLENGE 2024

January 1 - December 1, 2024

Every year more than 10,000 people participate in this FREE self-guided hiking and bicycling program to explore the East Bay regional parks and to keep fit outdoors. The Trails Challenge is made possible with the generosity of the Regional Parks Foundation and Kaiser Permanente, who have sponsored the Trails Challenge since 2005.

For the past 31 years, the Park District has promoted healthy recreation and time in nature through its annual Trails Challenge program. The free program connects people to nature through hiking and biking by providing 20 designated trails ranging from easy to challenging.

The Trails Challenge is part of the global <u>Healthy Parks Healthy</u> <u>People (HPHP)</u> movement that underscores the connection between a healthy green environment and community health.

The 2024 Guidebook includes 20 detailed trail descriptions available for all levels of fitness, from easy to challenging. There are trails open to hikers, bicyclists, dogs, and equestrians, and Trails Challenge 2024 offers increased accessibility with trails that have been evaluated and identified as usable by persons with mobility limitations (see pages 7- 13).

To complete the challenge, hike five of the 20 trails, or 26.2 miles of trails within East Bay Regional Park District. You can submit your log, online or by mail, by December 1, 2024, and receive a commemorative pin, while supplies last.

Click or copy this URL to your browser to open East Bay Regional Parks website and download the Trail Challenge Guidebook, where to pick up your free T-shirt, and more news about the parks. <a href="https://www.ebparks.org/trails-challenge">https://www.ebparks.org/trails-challenge</a>

Submitted by Linda Slater

# CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR RETIREMENT

ALLEN, Shanale Social Services Agency

ALVARADO, Rebecca

ALVAREZ, Madelyn Non-Member

BOELK, April Superior Court

Non-Member

BROWN, Kevin LARPD

BUENAVISTA, Judy Alameda Health System

BURNS, Gena Alameda Health System

ESTRADA, Kim Health Care Services Agency HARTLEY, Veronica Sheriff's Office

JACKSON, Alisa Probation

JACKSON, Elaine Social Services Agency

JOHNSTON, Gina Child Support Services

KUMAR, Sarojini Alameda Health System

LAU, Albert Social Services Agency

NETHERTON, Michael

Sheriff's Office

RANGEL, Deana
Superior Court

RICKER, Scott Sheriff's Office

SAMPSON, Ja'Ney

Probation

TEDESCO PILLITTERI, Amy Health Care Services Agency

TENNISON, Christopher Alameda Health System

VIEIRA, Michelle Health Care Services Agency

WILLIAMS, Darrel Sheriff's Office

# **REAC Officers and Directors**

President:
Alicia Baptista............ alicia.baptista@comcast.net
Vice President:
Dawn Stevenson.........dawnrzs2@comcast.net
Secretary:

• Secretary:

Paul Reeves ......bongsaw@gmail.com

• Treasurer:

Liz Koppenhaver.....(510) 579-3319

• Directors:

• Directors Emeriti:

Barbara Jean Hallisey Jon Orellana Steve Scheinman Emily Shea Janet Waring

Editor: Gina Palmer

Editorial Committee: Connie Land, Alicia Baptista

Printing and Mailing: Red Arrow Printing Membership questions: reacwebsite@gmail.com

# **REAC'S Mission**

The purpose of the Retired Employees of Alameda County (REAC) is to promote the common good and general welfare of Alameda County retired employees, subject to the County Employees Retirement Act of 1937, by promoting the interests of its members throughout the community by means of social, political, and educational activities that advance the social welfare of such retirees.

Moving? Please fill out and mail this notice to the following address
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REAC, P.O. Box 302, Oakland, CA 94604
or e-mail reacwebsite@gmail.com

Name:
New Address:

1/2018

# Also send change of address to ACERA:

Alameda County Employees' Retirement Association (ACERA) 475 14th St., Ste. 1000, Oakland, CA 94612

Phone: 800-838-1932 or 510-628-3000

Select Option 1 for the Retiree Benefits Unit (health, vision, dental, etc.)

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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