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Cattails

For the Retired Public Employees of
San Joaquin County

Member of CRCEA (California Retired County Employees' Association)



Office Phone: (209) 468-8746

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – by Trish Huarte-Pechan



Spring is here! I always thought spring was a joyful season, bringing new life and energy to our world. Then I heard a podcast about a survey asking people to identify their least favorite season, and—you guessed it—it was Spring! People complained about sinus headaches, allergies to grasses and pollen, soggy rain—you name it. Come on, people! I still think spring is worth celebrating and RPESJC is celebrating, too. We have lots of activities, great food, and interesting speakers for you to enjoy.

Our activities report will give you some insight to the kinds of things we have already done. By the time you receive this May issue of *Cattails*, we will have added our annual Giants bus trip which we will brief you on in our August issue. Flyers for our annual June picnic and our August luncheon are included in this issue as well. The flyers tell you our menu and whether we have a speaker lined up for your education/entertainment.

In addition to our fun activities, RPESJC participates in California Retired County Employees Association (CRCEA), an organization of 37 Act Counties sharing similar structures and problems. The annual spring conference of CRCEA will have taken place in April. We will brief you in our August issue about new problems facing seniors, legislation that impacts our retirement, benefits that our affiliate members can offer us, and other important topics addressed at the April conference. The conference gives us the opportunity to share our problems with our colleagues and professionals advising retirees and prepare the RPESJC Board to better serve you, our members.

Besides our RPESJC activities, many of you are involved in holiday, family and cultural events that happen in spring and early summer. And then come graduations and promotions for all levels of education. These events bring

us together to celebrate and share our ideals with family and friends. What they all have in common is sharing and celebrating family, charity, and kindness in our community.

Meeting with your fellow retirees in any of our activities is another way of sharing and celebrating. At our December meeting, your RPESJC Board voted to reinstitute a “free lunch” policy for first time member attendees at a regular luncheon. “First timers” receive a certificate for use at a future regular luncheon (February, April, August, October). Invite your fellow retirees to become members of RPESJC so they can take advantage of this perk and all the activities and benefits offered through our organization.

So I urge you to embrace spring, celebrate events you are part of, and feel joy in our community. ❖

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ACTIVITIES REPORT — By John Solis



CHICKEN RANCH CASINO RESORT & OAKDALE CHEESE FACTORY

On March 18, thirty-eight RPESJC members traveled with us to a new destination, the Chicken Ranch Casino Resort in Jamestown, California. The bus captain was

John M. Solis, with Michelle Scott-Casale, Lisa Knight and Sally Tanaka serving as the bingo team on the bus. We departed from Hammer Ranch Center at 8:00 am and arrived at the Chicken Ranch Casino before 10:00 am. Refreshments and pastries were provided during the trip. The casino included \$10 of "Free Play" for returning guests and \$20 of Free Play for new players signing up for a Players Card. Our attendees enjoyed a stay of approximately 4.5 hours at the Casino. Several retirees went home big winners, winning in excess of \$1,200 and many more came home with winnings in excess of \$250. They also enjoyed the many restaurant options available at the resort.

We reboarded the bus at 2:30 pm and headed for the Oakdale Cheese Factory and Specialties. Everyone had the opportunity to purchase a variety of specialty goods, gifts, sweets, bread, and treats. Our guests enjoyed the specialty sandwiches they purchased. For more information about the Oakdale Cheese Factory, you can access their website at www.oakdalecheese.com.

As usual, we played a total of four bingo games. On the way to the casino, Joselyn Blomberg won \$10 cash in the first bingo game and Larry Mills and Victoria Heredia each won \$10 cash in the second game. On the way home, the winner of the third bingo game was Lenette Million, who won \$10 in cash, and the fourth prize winner was Sonia Munguia, a RPESJC member who elected to take the \$10 cash prize.

We headed for Stockton around 3:45 pm and arrived in Stockton safely around 5:00 pm.

FEBRUARY 12 "VALENTINE LUNCHEON"

Our first luncheon of 2026 was once again an

overwhelming success, with 100 registered participants and approximately 92 attended. We have a new caterer, Grgich Catering, who stayed the entire time, ensuring that the food was kept available. We received lots of compliments on the food and the service. This is the same caterer who has provided our June picnic in the past, and we are really satisfied with them.

Steve Moore has been working to get coffee donated for our luncheons and this time coffee was donated by Supervisor Paul Canepa, Representative for the Second Supervisorial District. We are sending thank you letters to our donors to express our appreciation.

Our featured speaker was Karen Jewell, San Joaquin County Adult Literacy Program Coordinator. Attendees received a wealth of information about the services and resources available on site at all the libraries and on the library website. Those luncheon attendees who did not have a library card were able to complete the application and were issued a library card on the spot. Karen Jewell informed us there are on-line reading resources, access to our local newspapers, books for children in 70 different languages and hobby classes like gardening, arts and crafts, and healthcare classes on prevention care. She encouraged members to volunteer for the literacy programs and indicated there are training activities for tutors to ensure success.

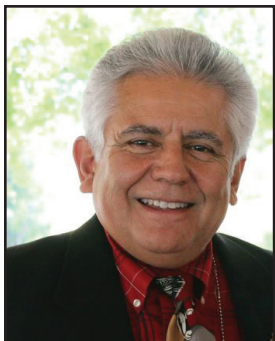
Renee Ostrander, CEO of the San Joaquin County Retirement Association, presented information on this year's Cost of Living Adjustment for San Joaquin County retirees. Please see her article in this issue. For additional

Continued on page 5

2026 RICHARD CALLISTRO SCHOLARSHIPS

The application deadline for the Richard Callistro Scholarship has been extended to June 1, 2026. The application and instructions are posted on the RPESJC website at www.rpesjc.org. Eligible applicants are graduating high school seniors who are children or grandchildren of dues-paid RPESJC members. Consistent with the most recent changes approved by the Board, awards will be \$2,500, and there will be up to eight scholarships awarded in 2026. Let your families know about this wonderful opportunity! ❖

SJCERA – PROGRESS OF NEW PENSION ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM By Steve Moore



At the March 13th Board of Retirement meeting, our new PAS (Pension Administration System) vendor, Heywood, gave a demonstration of some of the features of the new system.

The presentation was made by Sian Jones, Chief Executive Officer; John May, Chief Sales and Marketing Officer; and Mark Moynihan, Senior Solutions Consultant of Heywood Limited. For most of the Board, this was their first opportunity to examine what Heywood has to offer.

Heywood is located in the United Kingdom, but that hasn't kept them from visiting the SJCERA office to meet with staff in order to fulfill the contracted milestones of the project.

The Board was favorably impressed with the demonstration. The access to data for all levels of staff, members (active/retired) and employers was notable. Members will be able to directly access their information with ease and will have the authority to make direct changes to their information i.e. (address changes, beneficiary information, etc.)

The established comprehensive training program to train all who will be interacting with the system in the future was remarkable.

The new PAS achieved defined milestones in February of this year, with overall project implementation progressing well since its January 2026 kick-off. Phase one objectives such as prioritized high-level PAS requirements, project initiation documents, comprehensive project plans, a training plan, and discovery outputs have been completed.

Currently, the project is progressing on the initial data migration environment, Americanized Altair installation, and the completion of the US data center contract.

Overall, the project has been on schedule, with attention directed to completing discovery, for initial anonymized data delivery in March. This is necessary to proceed with the scheduled functional testing of the overall system.

I am pleased to report that Heywood while working on system capabilities, upgrades and enhancements, the security of your data is the paramount focus within the program development.

I look forward to the completion of this project that will meet our current requirements and future needs, providing for additional developments as the industry evolves. ❖

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

From the US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

What is mental health? Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act, and helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.

Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. Over the course of your life, if you experience mental health problems, your thinking, mood, and behavior could be affected.

Do you think someone you know may have a mental health problem? Talking about mental health can be difficult. If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call or text 988, which is the

Continued on page 7

MAY TRIVIA—CALIFORNIA

- 1) In 1945, an ice cream shop named Burt's/ Snowbird Ice Cream was founded in Glendale, CA. This later ended up becoming what chain?
- 2) Which California county boasts the world's largest geothermal field?
- 3) On average, how many earthquakes does California experience each year?
a) 750 b) 5,000 c) 25,000 d) Over 100,000
- 4) What famous author lived in Big Sur and wrote several books about the area, including "Big Sur" and "On the Road"?
- 5) Can you name all six hikes/peaks that make up the Six-Pack of Peaks Challenge?

Answers on Page 5

WELCOME NEW RPESJC MEMBERS!

Name	Department
Elizabeth Afzal	Sheriff
Debra Aguilera	Not Given
Patrick Balagey	Not Given
Kathleen Brewer	Human Services
Alihigai Brownfield	Sheriff
Matthew Dacey	County Counsel
Marlissa Davis	Human Services
Aaron Devencenzi	Mosquito Abatement
Zanett Dials	Superior Court
Lawrence Gardiman	Sheriff
Celeste Jocson	SJ General Hospital
Teri Jorgensen	Behavioral Health

Name	Department
Karen Kinser	Public Works
Steve Kowalczyk	Sheriff
Jeri Lucchetti	Behavioral Health
Kathleen Mc Donnell	Probation
Sandra Mendez	Sheriff
Deepak Mohan	Sj General Hospital
Nancy Negrette-Kiger	Not Given
Lisa Noffsinger	Not Given
Robert O Rourke	County Counsel
Lolita Pearson	Human Resources
Gloria Pesetti	District Attorney
Christopher Sterni	Sheriff ❖

NEW RETIREES (JAN-MAR)

Name	Department	Years
Brenda Agraz-Vaca	Probation	19
John Alvarez	Deferred	5
Tricia Anderson	Sheriff	26
Kelly Borrero	Deferred	9
Kathleen Brewer	Human Services	10
Alma Buksh	Deferred	16
Gilbert Castillo	Superior Court	28
Johnny Chang	Public Works	2
Rickard Crisp	SJ General Hospital	11
Tamara Crummett	Behavioral Health	8
Marlissa Davis	Human Services	37
Donna Delacruz-Refuerzo	SJ General Hospital	35
Amanda Deton	SJ General Hospital	22
Aaron Devencenzi	Mosquito Abatement	31
Chaing Eang	Deferred	9
Diane Elizalde	Mountain House	7
Maria Garcia	Deferred	3
Greta Gerstenberger	SJ General Hospital	6
Salome Hernandez	General Services	30
Paul Huerta	EEDD	25
Monica Jiminez	Treasurer/Tax Collector	7
Celeste Jocson	Deferred	19
Jerry Jordan	Behavioral Health	12
Neelima Kethineni	Deferred	17
Karen Kinser	Deferred	5
Emily Krediet	Deferred	7

Name	Department	Years
Barbara Kronlund	Deferred	14
Chang-Pey Lee	SJ General Hospital	11
Ellis Lee	Human Services	11
Douglas Louie	Mountain House	12
Dorothy Lum	Deferred	6
Kelley McHugh	Assessor/Recorder	17
Edwin Miranda	Deferred	1
Deepak Mohan	SJ General Hospital	15
Farideh Mozayani	SJ General Hospital	10
Anneliza Narvarte	Airport	27
Lawrence Newman	SJ General Hospital	30
Shivetti Beatrice Ossome	Deferred	3
Lolita Pearson	Human Resources	21
Janice Pimentel	SJ General Hospital	10
Shelly Prater	Deferred	10
Jeffery Rodrigues	Sheriff	26
Sophy Sem	SJ General Hospital	26
Veronica Serna	Deferred	10
Paula Shanda	Human Services	16
Delia Terrazas	Public Works	25
Lauren Thomasson	Deferred	2
Lisa Thornburg	Child Support	26
Nancy Vasquez	District Attorney	24
Dodgie Vidad	Deferred	17
Gina Vieira	Deferred	1
Vicki Zaragoza	SJ General Hospital	23
Yvonne Zerbe	Superior Court	20

YOUR BOARD NEEDS NEW MEMBERS!

Recently, our Secretary Vickie Delph moved out of state and had to resign her position on the Board. The Secretary position was filled by Miriam Lyell, but since Miriam was already on our Board, we still had a vacancy to fill.

Just last week another Board member, Edwina Byrd, resigned for health reasons. While we hope Edwina recovers and can seek membership on the Board again, we need to fill her role.

Board members play a vital role in running RPESJC and coordinating activities. Some of the duties include:

- Act as liaison between the general membership and the Board of Directors;
- Chair committees as assigned by the President;
- Assist with special functions of the RPESJC as needed;
- Assist with event set-up, such as decorating tables, putting up signs, getting refreshments, distributing prizes, clean-up;
- Solicit/purchase and assemble door prizes;
- Contact caterers, transportation companies, casinos, sports teams, or entertainment venues for contracting services/ticketing;
- Participate in activities and trips, serving as Trip Captains, and coordinating cleanup details;
- Meet via Zoom for the regular monthly board members meeting;
- Provide your fellow retirees with references / information to address any of their concerns.

No one person is expected to do all this and “many hands make light work.” If you join our Board, you will see the power of teamwork in action.

If you have an interest in being a part of this stellar organization, please send an email to rpesjc@gmail.com and one of our Nominating Committee members will be in touch with you. You can request to be a guest at one of our regular monthly Zoom meetings to get a flavor of what a Board member might do. We look forward to hearing from you! ❖

ACTIVITIES Cont. from Page 2

information and services, you can contact her at www.sjcera.org or reneo@sjcera.org.

RPESJC reinstituted our past practice of gifting first-time luncheon attendees (members only) with a free lunch at one of our regular luncheons. Three “first timers” were gifted but we only managed to get the names of two: Margaret Aldape and Donna Shane. Congratulations to both and we hope to see you regularly in the future. Congratulations also to the winner of the door prize donated by the Wealth Management team of Valley Strong Credit Union and the \$5 winner of the Black Marble prize. Finally, three cheers and congratulations to Bob and Sally Tanaka who are celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Flyers for our annual June picnic, scheduled for June 11, 2026 and our August luncheon, scheduled for August 13, 2026, are in this issue of Cattails. Menu, reservation and cost details are in the flyers. Hope to see you at both events! ❖

MAY TRIVIA ANSWERS

- 1) Baskin-Robbins
- 2) Sonoma County
- 3) Over 100,000
- 4) Jack Kerouac
- 5) Mt. Wilson, Cucamonga Peak, Mt. San Antonio (aka Mt. Baldy), San Bernardino Peak, Mt. San Jacinto, San Geronio ❖

ELECTRONIC RECEIPT OF CATTAILS

You may now receive your issue of Cattails by email. This will save paper and reduce postage costs for RPESJC. Simply contact the RPESJC office by email at rpesjc@gmail.com or by phone at (209) 468-8746 and leave your full name, your telephone number, and your email address. Please give consideration to this electronic option. ❖

Dates To Remember

Thurs., May 28, 2026	Board Meeting @ 10:00 a.m. – Send an email to rpesjc@gmail.com and request a Zoom invitation link to join the meeting.
Thurs., June 11, 2026	Annual summer picnic, Micke Grove Park 11793 N. Micke Grove Rd, Lodi 11:30 am. A reservation flyer is in this issue of Cattails.
Thurs., June 25, 2026	Board Meeting @ 10:00 a.m. – Send an email to rpesjc@gmail.com and request a Zoom invitation link to join the meeting.
Thurs., July 23, 2026	Board Meeting @ 10:00 a.m. – Send an email to rpesjc@gmail.com and request a Zoom invitation link to join the meeting.
Thurs., Aug. 13, 2026	Bi-Monthly Luncheon @ Julia Harrison Memorial Building In Micke Grove Park 11793 N. Micke Grove Rd, Lodi 11:30 am. Guest speaker: Court Appointed Special Advocate program representative. Advance reservations required. See flyer in this edition for reservation details. ❖

SJCERA CEO'S CORNER — By Renee Ostrander



Happy spring retirees! Even with all this hot weather, spring is still here and in bloom. Just make sure you are keeping cool and hydrated as we head into a scorching summer. With that, we have a few exciting updates that may interest you.

COLA: 2% FOR 2026 RETIREES

In February, the SJCERA Board of Retirement announced a 2% Cost-Of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for eligible 2026 retirees. To be eligible for this year's COLA, you must have retired on or before April 1, 2026. COLA's go into effect April 1st and appeared on your April benefit checks/deposits.

Remember, SJCERA offers a banked COLA. So, if you retired:

- ✦ On or before April 1, 2023: 3.0%
- ✦ After April 1, 2023, but on or before April 1, 2024: 2.5%
- ✦ After April 1, 2024: 2.0%

2026 HEALTH PLAN OPEN ENROLLMENT BEGINS MAY 1

If you have health care or have the eligibility to have health care through San Joaquin County, open enrollment is upon us! From May 1 – 29, you will be able to elect from the various health plans offered to retirees through the County. The County has notified us that all Health Net plans will not be an available option. So, if you have Health Net, please be sure to update your insurance to a new plan.

As is typical, open enrollment will be effective July 1, 2026; however, the County is planning to transition health coverage to a calendar year beginning in 2027. A second Open Enrollment period will open in the fall for 2027 coverage.

To make any changes, you must submit your completed forms to SJCERA no later than May 22.

For retirees not in Health Net that wish to keep their current plan, no action is necessary.

If you have not received your enrollment forms in the mail from the county yet, you can view more information online at the County's Retirement Benefits page. If you're unsure where to find the information on the County's site, we have a link on our page:

www.sjcera.org ❖

IN MEMORIAM

We extend our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of those who meant so much.



Donald Auchard	Animal Control
Patricia Bogart	Health Care Services
Doris Casey-Nash	Behavioral Health
Joseph Fischer	Health Care Services
Penny Frazier	Health Care Services
Eunice Friedrich	Human Services
Lee Hammond	Child Support
Wanna Haskins	Public Health
Crystal Hinthorne	Human Services
Robert James	Sheriff
Nicholas Kaps	SJ General Hospital
Juan Lopez	Human Services
Janet Martin	Health Care Services-
Priscilla Mikaio	EEDD
Linda Mireles	Probation
Seferino Moncevais	Public Works
Robert Montgomery	Probation
Christy Mundy	Human Services
Elsie Murphy	Human Services
Vicki Norris	Human Services
William Nunnery	SJ General Hospital
Librado Perez	Human Services
Nora Porterfield	SJ General Hospital
Ernesto Prendez	SJ General Hospital
Janice Raverty	SJ General Hospital
Keith Sales	Sheriff-Stockton
Marlene Selna	County Office of Education
Catherine Sotelo	SJ General Hospital
Joseph Trevino	General Services
Norma Trout	Human Services
Vernon Vincelet	Sheriff
Troy White	Public Works ❖

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Member comments and suggestions should be directed to Staff Advisor, RPESJC Newsletter. Email: rpesjc@gmail.com, or contact

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MENTAL HEALTH Cont. from Page 3

National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, operated by the national Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). To learn how to get support for mental health, drug, and alcohol issues, visit [FindSupport.gov](https://findsupport.gov). To locate treatment facilities or providers, visit [FindTreatment.gov](https://findtreatment.gov) or call SAMHSA's National Helpline at 800-662-HELP (4357). Information provided by SAMHSA, samhsa.gov/mental-health/988, 9/26/2025. ❖

The RPESJC Newsletter is published four times each year. The information published in it is believed to be reliable. However, the newsletter staff assumes no responsibility for inaccuracies contained herein.

MEMBERS FINANCIAL SERVICES — By Frank Feng



Frank Feng, CFP®, ChFC®, CRPC®
Financial Advisor,
Valley Strong Retirement &
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CA Insurance Lic. #0B68988

Question: Hi Frank, I have a disabled child who needs special care even after I am gone. Could you share some ideas on the things I should be aware of? Thanks!

Answer: As a parent of a child with special needs, it is vital to ensure your child will continue to be provided for after you are gone. It can be difficult to contemplate, but with patience, love, and perseverance, a long-term strategy may be attainable.^{1,2}

Envisioning a Life After You: Just as every child with special needs is unique, so too are the challenges families will face. Think about the potential needs of your child. Will they require daily custodial care or ongoing medical treatments? Will your child live alone? Can family members assume some of the care? Answers to these and other questions can help form the vision of what may need to be done to plan for your child's care.

Preparing Your Estate: What kinds of financial support will your child receive? One resource is government

benefits, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid. If you want to provide the support with your personal assets, you should consider creating a special needs trust, the assets of which can be structured to fund your child's care without disqualifying them from government assistance. Using a trust involves a complex set of tax rules and regulations. Before moving forward with a trust, consider working with a professional who is familiar with the rules and regulations.

Involve the Family: All affected family members should be involved in the decision-making process. It's best to have a unified front of family members to care for your child after you've passed on.

Identify a Caregiver: If the special needs child needs ongoing help, you would need to name a caregiver to make financial and health care decisions. This person needs to be someone you trust and also works well with the child.

This is for general information only. Please consult an attorney for specific advice.

If you like more information on this topic or any other financial issues, please call me at (209) 518-2801 or email me at frank.feng@valleystrong.com. ♦

Notes: ¹ Investopedia.com, December 14, 2023

² AmericanAdvocacyGroup.com, 2024

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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