

RETIRED EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION (REA) OF THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
RETREAT MEETING MINUTES
January 29, 2010, Mission Trails Park Visitors' Center

At 9:30 a.m., the meeting was called to order by President Jim Baross, presiding jointly with Past President Nancy Acevedo.

REA Board Officers Present: President Jim Baross, Vice President for Programs Dave Twomey, Vice President for Advocacy Patti Karnes, Secretary Ruth Ann Hageman, and Treasurer Gary Hess. **Directors Present:** Immediate Past President Nancy Acevedo, Web-master Art Brown, Director Bob Korch, Director Ty Rogers, Director & Revitalization Chair Maggie Smith, and Director Dick Wilken.

Appointed Members of the Board Present: Membership Sylvia Tatum, Newsletter Editor Janet Wood and Parliamentarian Robert West. **Others Present:** Retiree Issues Task Force Member Joe Flynn, Past Hospitality Chair Dora Garcia, Past Director Burnie Gipson, Assistant Newsletter Editor Jean Struiksma, Past Director Lynn Swanson, and Assistant Web-Master John Tsiknas.

Absent: the Elected Representative to the SDCERS Board Dave Hall, Director Terry Flynn, MEA representative Helen Phillips, Hospitality Co-Hosts Mary Lynn Hyde and Janet Burgess, Sunshine Committee Sharon Beach and Roster Maintenance Kaye Carey.

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT:

Nancy Acevedo has turned over voluminous files to new President Jim Baross; she has agreed to stay on the Retiree Issues Task Force (other representatives to the Task Force are Joe Flynn and Bob West). The current issue before RITF include the many employees, especially safety employees, who were injured on the job. Usually City Management places these employees in "light duty" positions until they are able to return to their regular duties. However, a problem has arisen when these individuals cannot return to their regular duties and therefore seek a disability retirement and are sometimes evaluated by SDCERS on the requirements of the "light duty" position instead of their regular position. [N.B. from Joe Flynn: They would still qualify for their regular earned retirement in a service retirement if they are old enough and have sufficient years of service. The problem is in the "disability retirement" area.]

Nancy reviewed the 2009 Goals, and they were amended as follows:

- Preserve Current Benefits (Health Insurance [Bob West has the latest update]; Supplemental COLA; Annual Supplemental Benefit (a.k.a. "the thirteenth check"; and Corbett [which is in the process of being updated]); Make sure these are up to date and add our stated position.
- Continue Pro-active Advocacy Committee
- Increase Membership; Coordinate Activities with RF&P
- Monitor CERS Complete Review of Information Papers (Health Insurance, et. al.)
- Work to have Corbett Reinstated for Non-Service Eligible Disability Retirees;
- Monitor Earnings in CD's; Obtain Demographic Statistics via Actuarial Report
- Continue Hand in Hand Program
- Survey Membership as needed

It was moved and seconded (Wilken, Hageman) that these goals be adopted for 2010. Motion passed unanimously. (The 2009 goal of monitoring a proposed CA Constitutional Amendment allowing retirement benefits to be reduced could be dropped because the proposal did not get on the ballot.)

PRESIDENT:

Jim Baross said he is learning what the organization has been doing and the history of the organization. He is encouraged, enthusiastic and interested in pursuing his new position as President. He asked that board members wear the name tags which can be obtained from Lynn Swanson. If a board member needs one, send an email to Lynn (swansong@cox.net).

VICE PRESIDENT, ADVOCACY:

Patti Karnes said that the issues are evolving. She referred to Michael Zucchet's suggestion that a retiree be present at MEA-City meetings. There was some discussion about this idea, which proved to be infeasible. As a back-up position, Dick Wilken suggested that we meet with MEA occasionally to exchange perspectives. Lynn Swanson suggested that exchanging information is okay, but that negotiations are confidential. A subcommittee was formed consisting of Ty Rogers, Dick Wilken and Patti Karnes to establish on-going communication with MEA.

Patti reported that the Mayor has not been putting healthcare costs on his 5 year projection. He has said that active employees do not have a vested right to healthcare. Patti suggested a letter to Judge Barton in the future about the situation.

In terms of contact with the City Council, Lynn Swanson suggested that we take to them the information papers we have on Health Insurance, the Supplemental COLA; the Annual Supplemental Benefit; and Corbett. It was stressed by Jim Baross that the person making the contact with City Council must have pre-approval of the board, and that contacts should be within the material in the position papers. He stressed that under REA's charter with the State of California (as the "City of San Diego Retired Employees Association"), we are a 501(c)7 organization which means we can lobby.

Patti continued in terms of goals we need to keep SDCERS independent of the City and watch the funding level. There is an idea of asking current employees to start paying for the unfunded liability. A citizen has suggested using retirement funds to build new facilities. He suggested giving the pension board the property of the City; the pension board has said "no." There was a comment questioning the quality and background of City Attorney Goldsmith's deputies. Goldsmith has said that the City must increase taxes before we go into bankruptcy. Dick Wilken commented, if bankruptcy comes, we should be ready. If there were bankruptcy, would money from the retirement funds be used to provide representation for various groups, for example, retirees? Joe Flynn commented that in the case of bankruptcy, it is the debtor (the City of San Diego) who would be responsible for providing legal representation for retirees; not the Pension Fund. Dick said he is concerned how retiree legal representation would be chosen, and how we could be sure that we have competent bankruptcy attorneys. Also, who would determine what are the interests/positions of the retiree group. He said we should position REA to become the effective focal point for this potential eventuality.

At a meeting last year, in a general discussion of retiree issues, the REA board met with several attorneys: John Kaheny, Ted Bromfield, Alan Sumption, etc. It was directed that the Advocacy Subcommittee come up with an attorney group among retirees who can help us with issues that might arise in the future.

Dick Wilken said it was important to take REA to the next level: we must be more organized in order to be effective in advocacy.

SECRETARY:

Secretary Ruth Ann Hageman said that minutes will be posted on the website. Copies of General Meeting minutes will be made available to members at the General Meeting.

TREASURER:

Former Treasurer Sylvia Tatum and newly appointed Treasurer Gary Hess are working together. Gary said that he is trying to get up on the learning curve with regard to Sylvia's excellent work.

MEMBERSHIP:

Revitalization Chair Maggie Smith reported that the Revitalization committee has been talking about a new membership brochure. It would be a digital, color version perhaps to be sent to every retired person in the City. Postage would need to be calculated. We could ask SDCERS to use their bulk mailing permit. We need to reach people who are retired and are not yet members of REA. Jim Baross said that the board members from the website, the newsletter and membership will be getting together in an ad hoc committee for the design. Dick said that we need to pump up the text. Also, we need to get an electronic version. Lynn said that links can be created to join REA on-line. Jim said that the draft of this new brochure should be circulated among the board.

Right now there are about 10,000 active employees and 4,427 retirees of which 1,200 are members of Retired Fire and Police Association (RFPA) and 1,000 are members of REA. Therefore RFPA and REA have a recruitment task of 2,227 unaffiliated retirees. [Clarification of these numbers was provided by Joe Flynn.]

Dave Twomey emphasized Art's idea of branding. Other ideas brought forth were: we need to get a consistently good-looking product, and it might be possible to involve Print Shop and Planning staff or retirees. Maggie said she will receive ideas for a nickname as San Diego Retired Employee Association is too cumbersome, and, more importantly, too easily confused with SDCERS, the Retirement System. Meanwhile Bob Korch suggested that "Retired Employees' Association (REA)" be used and this was agreed to by consensus. Jean Struiksma also emphasized that those who are moving away need to know the benefit of being part of this organization. Jim said that when the ad hoc committee of the website, the newsletter, membership and revitalization get together, they can come back to the board with all of these ideas.

NEWSLETTER:

Jean Struiksma and Janet Wood have been working together and will continue to do so. She asked that people send items ahead of time as much as possible. Jean saves items for the following month in a file, and Janet will continue that practice. Janet said that an emphasis will be on trying to get an item as accurate as possible. Joe suggested to those writing that they put the important stuff at the top of the article so that if there is insufficient room, the lower part can be cut. Patti noted that the change in meeting schedules of SDCERS will impact what she can submit to the newsletter.

ACTIVE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION (MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION, MEA):

Lynn Swanson, standing in for Helen Phillips who could not be present, said that though Helen is part of MEA's closed session meetings, she will not report on what transpires there; she will not violate confidentiality. Helen's email says, "notellinhelen."

HOSPITALITY:

Dora Garcia reported for Mary Lynn Hyde and Janet Burgess because they could not be present. Dora reported that the transition is going well. Maggie pointed out that the board has been dismissing early so they can mix with attendees. Jim Baross asked, could we have nametags for everyone who comes in? Dora mentioned a policy was set forth a few years ago which said that if a member served as a greeter three times, they would have a free Holiday Luncheon. [N.B. This policy needs to be reexamined because of what this does to the bottom line of the Holiday Luncheon expenses, and some have questioned whether or not three times is enough to warrant a free Holiday Luncheon.] Dora said that this policy increased the number of volunteers, but then the number fell off again. Dora mentioned problems with the caterer in the past who could not afford to put on the lunch at the price the association was willing to pay. Dora said we have nametags and a roster of new members. Jim asked if we could have someone introduce the new members. John Tsiknas said the chair could ask, Who is here for the first time? Maggie said that friendliness increased when we started having coffee and Nancy's home-baked cookies. Patti and Jean Hughes said that we should encourage members to sit with someone they don't know.

HOLIDAY PARTY.

Jean Hughes wanted to thank the Revitalization Committee for their work on hospitality for the holiday party. There were various ideas put forth that were not approved. One was to have a holiday party next year. Jim Baross suggested we sponsor a department reunion party for each department. Patti said that would be a great way to recruit non-members. Dora said that the food bank function should be in late September or October.

WEBSITE.

John Tsiknas said how pleased he is to be passing on the website which he designed and has produced over the years to Art Brown who is bright, eager and so enthusiastic that he has signed up to take classes to learn the intricacies of being captain of this ship.

John also urged members to use Adobe. Since Adobe can be downloaded for free, it shouldn't be an issue about whether one can read Adobe attachments: anyone can. Also, if you don't receive the roster, contact John.

HELPING HANDS.

"Helping Hands" began as a spin-off from a program called "Hand in Hand" that Fire Department widows Cherie Olaveson and Sarah Contreras had set up in the Fire and Police Department for uniformed officers. Cherie and Sarah set up their program to help widows or widowers of uniformed officers through the intricacies of paperwork and other necessary work upon the death of a spouse.

Ty Rogers, Ruth Ann Hageman, Sylvia Tatum, Mary Bush and Janet Burgess volunteered for this committee. Other members included Dora Garcia, Carmen Lutes, Doug McHenry, Patti Karnes, Terry Flynn, Larry Gardner, Mary Lynn Hyde and Paulette Mormino.

Helping Hands first began by being briefed on their program by Cherie and Sarah. Then we started to develop our own program for all of the City's general employees (including those in the Fire and Police Departments). Ty Rogers suggested the name of our group, and Janet Burgess brought a checklist that she had used because of deaths in her own family and among her friends and neighbors. Sylvia Tatum, Dora Garcia, Mary Bush and Carmen Lutes, as well as Janet Burgess, talked about the experience of losing a

HELPING HANDS, Cont'd:

loved one and the details that had to be handled.

Using Janet's checklist and other members' experiences as a base, the committee did research on papers provided by Mary Lynn Hyde who found relevant material on the web relating to social security benefits, tax consequences to the family, suggestions for moving (or not), other checklists, etc. The Helping Hands checklist was improved and finalized.

The group scans the newspaper for deaths of City employees, and each month a designated Helping Hands member phones or otherwise tries to contact the family (often through the Legacy section of the Union Tribune website). Each committee member takes a month of the year. However, this is a hit-or-miss process: we might not recognize a City employee, and the notice might go into the paper a considerable time after the death.

Meanwhile, at the Retiree Issues Task Force, Nancy Acevedo suggested to the Retirement System staff that they accommodate our information to be sent to the bereaved family. (Partly Nancy asked for this because SDCERS was allowing the Police-Fire group, Hand in Hand, to immediately receive information that SDCERS gets from Social Security.) Nancy and SDCERS staff agreed that our checklist and tax information could be included in the packet that they send out to the family. We decided to include only the most immediately relevant information, which was the questionnaire and the tax information. This is now being done.

Committee members, representing the Retirement Association, were present at the funerals of Alan Hardtarfer, Lorna Murt Lingo and Marie Scrivener Bell and Felipe Mendoza.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE:

Last year, in the Revitalization Committee, we started talking about "what the members want." We decided that one good way to discover what the members want was to ask them. So, together we devised a questionnaire to find out how our members thought we were doing. The nine main questions were,

- A. Do you read the monthly Retirement Association Newsletter;
- B. If you cannot come to Retirement Association meetings, would you let us know why;
- C. If you do come to Retirement Association meetings, why do you come?
- D. How do you want the Retirement Association to change?
- E. What do you want the Retirement Association to do?
- F. What do you want the Retirement Association volunteers to continue to do?
- G. Why haven't you been a member of the Retirement Association Board? And,
- H. Are you able to be more active in the Retirement Association?

THE QUESTIONNAIRE, Cont'd:

In addition, there was space by each question for the member to add comments, criticisms and compliments.

We decided to limit costs by sending out 250 questionnaires, about 25% of our membership. For each board member each of 20 questionnaires were put in a stamped mailing envelope along with a stamped return envelope. Board members were also given a piece of the roster from which they could choose who they were going to ask to fill out the questionnaire. The process each board member used was to phone a member from their piece of the roster (and this could be done anytime: during the day, evenings,

weekends) and ask the member if they would be willing to fill out the questionnaire so we could find out how well we were doing. Most responded positively. Then, each of 191 members' answers on the questionnaire were tallied and the commentaries copied verbatim. There were up to 10,887 answers to the 57 questions. You can read all of the results, but here are four highlights:

92% of the members responding said they read the Retirement Association newsletter (many said "always") and that was evenly divided between those who read it on-line and those who receive the newsletter by mail.

91% said that what they want the Retirement Association to do is work to protect their retirement; keep them informed about what is happening to their retirement and work to keep the health care benefit.

90% said that they want the Retirement Association volunteers to provide leadership and speak effectively for all retirees' benefits at the SDCERS Retirement System and the City Council.

83% said that they wanted the board to continue to research and report on special issues/projects, such as health care, annual audits, and revitalization.

This questionnaire was not perfect. It was done in a hurry to beat summer vacations. Some of the questions are redundant or not well expressed. However, the checklist showed how important the newsletter is to members, how the retirees see this association as a group to help protect their retirement and health care benefits through keeping them informed and through board members speaking effectively at the SDCERS Retirement System and the City Council. And finally, the hundreds of commentaries showed how much retirees appreciate the work that the board has been doing.

REVITALIZATION:

Maggie began with the number of goals this committee has worked on. They will have meetings in the next month. Every member served on the issues dealing with the newsletter; also the committee initiated the idea of redoing the membership brochure to make it more attractive and modern. It is important to increase membership among retirees and to increase member-participation by making meetings more friendly. The committee has already taken steps and will continue to work on this important activity.

PROGRAMS:

Patti spoke about the luncheon at the Mission Bay Yacht Club. For one thing, it was an opportunity for Dave Hall to speak with April Boling and with the League of Women Voters President Norma Damaschak.

PROGRAMS (Cont'd):

Dave Twomey gave an update on the progress so far with the program schedule he has proposed. He said there has been good feedback with regard to Ranch Catering's food. He is exploring the use of the Balboa Park Club in place of the Veterans' Memorial Building. His recommendation is that REA contribute to the luncheons because these luncheons are a tool for promoting membership. It covers the social element in our By-Laws.

Dave had earlier sent to board members two spreadsheets showing his proposals for changing the schedule of General and Board meetings and also associating the meetings of REA with the meetings of SDCERS.

Attached to these minutes are the spreadsheets that Dave distributed for discussion. As a result of Dave's proposals, there was a very lively discussion among the present and past board members.

Maggie suggested that instead of "dark" meetings we should have general meetings each month even without a luncheon. Let people come and hear a speaker. Ty Rogers said, among other things, "I didn't join this organization to have lunch." Bernie asked, What about the SDCERS health care meetings? Nancy answered that they put on their own meeting which is for us and for Retired Fire and Police (RFP); it could be in place of our June general meeting, or not. Joe Flynn declared that he is against all subsidies. Lynn said that there could be a tier system for dues, charging on the basis of the level of income each retiree receives.

Maggie moved and Bob West seconded that REA continue regular general monthly meetings. The vote among the new board was 10 for and 3 against. The motion passed. Dick Wilken moved and Bob Korch seconded that the board approve the concept of 3 additional subsidized lunches, with the subsidy amounting to about \$6 per lunch. Bob West suggested an amendment to retain the current dinner price for members. It was moved that some flexibility be allowed in the \$6 amount for tax, tip and unexpected items. It was also moved that the subsidy be taken from the existing operating budget. These motions were incorporated into the main motion which was passed 11 for and 2 against.

Patti Karnes moved and Bob Korch seconded that REA continue to publish monthly newsletters. This motion passed unanimously.

Jim Baross summarized that it is the intent of the REA Board to continue the regular newsletter and the frequency of meetings.

Patti Karnes pointed out that the very successful barbeque at the Police Pistol Range was subsidized and that we are assuming it will be subsidized again. Ruth Ann inserted that last year's barbeque was subsidized by John Swanson's volunteering the hard work to put the event on.

Dave Twomey said that the luncheons are one of the main ways we can reach out and try to increase our membership. Lynn asked, is the goal to get more members to participate or to get more members?

Bob West pointed out that the question of raising dues needed to be moved to another meeting; dues cannot be raised until October.

PROGRAMS, Cont'd:

There was some discussion about whether or not our real goal is to get more active people. Dick Wilken said that just getting more members is okay too. Joe Flynn said we need to energize existing members. Bob Korch said we have had good speakers, and that people who live far away cannot come. Some felt we need more people: it adds to our clout. Also, it was said that we need more people that work. [N.B. it wasn't specified what more work we want people to do. Is it showing up for SDCERS and City Council meetings? Is it working on committees such as Revitalization?]

Dave Twomey made a motion that the three subsidized lunches will cost REA an amount not to exceed \$1,500. This motion passed 11 to 2.

Janet Wood said that the barbeque should be scheduled for August because there are 2 events in June and 2 in September. The motion was made by Ruth Ann and seconded by Dick Wilken; motion passed 8 to 0.

Bob West pointed out that the board can always change its mind.

The matter of not charging dues to members over 80 was discussed; Nancy said that this is not unanimously approved by members over 80. There will be a continuing discussion of the dues structure at the next board meeting. Meanwhile, we should stop advertising in the newsletter that members over 80 get their dues forgiven.

THE BUDGET:

The board discussed and approved the REA budget for 2010. The results will be presented in the next Treasurer's Report. The major increases in the budget were for subsidized lunches and printing of member-brochures.

ADJOURNMENT:

The retreat adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Ann Hageman, Board Secretary

ATTACHMENT 1

RECOMMENDED GENERAL MEETING CALENDARS FOR 2010 AND 2011

2010

<u>JAN</u>	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>APR</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>JUN</u>	<u>JUL</u>	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEP</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>
Mtg	Mtg	Dark	Mtg	Dark	Spc. Event	Dark	Dark	Mtg	Mtg	Dark	Spc. Event

2011

Dark	Mtg	Dark	Mtg	Dark	Spc. Event	Dark	Dark	Mtg	Mtg	Dark	Spc. Event
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(1) Recommend shifting BBQ event last held at Pistol Range in August '09 to late June as a 4th of July celebration

For 2010, all regular meetings (non-special event) are held in Balboa Park Club except Jan and Oct which are WMB. The January mtg is already booked at WMB. The October mtg is being planned as a “State of the System” annual event which could draw more than the 80 person capacity of the Balboa Park Club.

2/10/2010

2/10/2010

RECOMMENDED COMBINED CALENDAR FOR 2010

	<u>JAN</u>	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>APR</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>JUN</u>	<u>JUL</u>	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEP</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>
SDCERS*	X		X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X
REA BUS**	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X
REA GEN***	X	X		X		SPEC EVENT(1)			X	X		SPEC EVENT
NWSLTR****	X		X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X

*SDCERS meetings as recently announced for every 6 weeks

**REA Business Only meetings are scheduled to follow SDCERS meetings in months where no general meeting is scheduled

*** General Member meeting w/speaker and lunch as previously recommended

**** To be published following each SDCERS meeting

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SDCERS 2010
CALENDAR

REA 2010
CALENDAR

NEWSLETTER YES/NO?

Jan. 22	Jan. 12	Gen. Mtg	YES - SDCERS JAN. MTG + REA FEB. PROG.
Feb. Dark	Feb. 9	Gen. Mtg.	NO
Mar. 5	Dark		YES - SDCERS MAR. MTG. + REA APR. PROG.
Apr. 16	Apr. 13	Gen. Mtg.	YES - SDCERS APR. MTG.
May 28	May 11	Bus. Only	YES - SDCERS MAY MTG. + REA JUN SPECIAL EVENT
Jun. Dark	Jun. 15	Bus. Only	NO
	Jun. 30 (1)	Special Event	
Jul. 9	Jul. 13	Bus. Only	YES - SDCERS JUL. MTG.
Aug. 20	Dark		YES - SDCERS AUG. MTG. + REA SEP. & OCT. PROG.
Sep. Dark	Sep. 14	Gen. Mtg.	NO (WILL NEED ELECTONIC REMINDER RE OCT PROG + POSTCARD BUT NO PRINTING)
Oct. 1	Oct. 12	Gen. Mtg.	YES - SDCERS OCT. MTG.
Nov. 5	Nov. 9	Bus. Only	YES - SDCERS NOV. MTG. + REA DEC. SPECIAL EVENT
Dec. 17	Dec. 21?	Spec. Event	YES - SDCERS DEC. MTG.
Jan. Unknown	Jan. 11	Bus. Only	