



# SCARE Newsletter

Sonoma County Association of Retired Employees

Published Quarterly August 2025 Volume 325 Issue 3

## Calendar of Events 2025

### Membership Meetings

8/26/25, 11/18/25

Meetings are at 1pm at  
Finley Center and by Zoom

### Board Meetings

1:00 PM Dates may change so  
call Board member first.

9/10/25, 11/5/25

### **Get Newsletter by Email:**

Many members have agreed to get notices and newsletters via email. This saves money and trees and lets us get info to you more quickly. Plus you can increase the font size for easier reading!! If you are willing to get notices and the newsletter via email, send an email to [communications@sonomacountyretirees.com](mailto:communications@sonomacountyretirees.com) authorizing SCARE to send them to you. Please add that address to your address book so spam filters let it through.

If you would like to get the newsletter both by email and by USPS, contact Lou Maricle ([maricles2@gmail.com](mailto:maricles2@gmail.com))

The SCARE Newsletter is printed quarterly. The information printed in the newsletter is believed to be accurate and from reliable sources. However, no responsibility is assumed by SCARE, the Editor, or the writers for inaccuracies in the articles as published.

## President's Message by Kathy Young

Thank you to our members who have taken the time to tell their stories to the Board of Supervisors. Some have made presentations to the Board of Supervisors, many have sent letters and emails. We encourage you to continue to let the BOS know that the delay in granting appropriate COLAs increases the impact. Many spoke during the budget hearings in April. Although some of the Supervisors appear interested, the issue continues to be pushed down the road. SCERA brought forward 4 different one-time COLA funding scenarios. The BOS asked the County Council to investigate what is feasible under the law. No specific timeframe was given. It is important that we do not let up getting our message that COLAs are desperately needed to the BOS. More on COLAs on page 3.

Next steps for your SCARE Board include establishing a PAC or Political Action Committee which would allow us to support County Supervisors or those running for office who we believe would assist county retirees in getting COLAs and maintaining medical benefits. We also want to make sure that retirees and new hires know there have been no COLAs since 2008. Phyris has been working with SCERA and they have agreed to change the wording in their written handout "After Retirement" to show there has been no COLA since 2008. In researching what information is given to new hires, there does not appear to be any information that shows we do not have regular COLAs. We are going to ask that that a statement be included with HR materials showing retiree benefits. And yes, that would likely affect recruitment as some people will not come to Sonoma County if they know a retirement COLA is not guaranteed.

At our next SCARE Membership Meeting in addition to getting an update on COLA efforts, Joni Huntsperger will let us know about the Master Plan for Aging in Sonoma County. For more on the Master Plan, see page 5 of the newsletter

Our Membership meeting will be held at 1:00 PM on August 26, 2025, in person at the Finley Center Cypress Room or by Zoom. The Zoom information is: Join Zoom Meeting at <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/8954632781?omn=83007426292>, Meeting ID: 895 463 2781, Dial by your location: +1 669 444 9171 US.

We look forward to seeing you at the August membership meeting.

## Board of Directors

### Officers

**President** — Kathy Young

707 539-8027

kyoung2@sonic.net

**Vice President** — Carol Bauer

707 708-1061

bfuzzy51@aol.com

**Secretary** — Paul Carroll

707 559-0588

Pf.carroll58@gmail.com

**Treasurer** — Phyris Tobler

707 795-6926

phyris@sbcglobal.net

**Immediate Past President** —

Alix Shor

707 495-4992

alixshor@sonic.net

### Directors at Large

Chris Bauer

Andre Bercut

Ed Clites

Shaun Du Fosee

Lou Maricle

John Pels

Vacant

### Retirement Board Retiree Reps

Mark Walsh

**Alternate:** Neil Baker

### Committee Chairs & Tasks

**Health Benefits/JLMBC:** Phyris Tobler

**Membership:** Lou Maricle

**Financial Oversight:** Phyris Tobler

**CRCEA Rep:** Carol Bauer

**Alternate:** Lou Maricle

**Newsletter Editor:** Phyris Tobler

**Programs:**

**Scholarships:** Ed Clites

**SCCLO, ICPC, NBLC:** Bill Robotka

**Facebook Coordinator:** Bob Bulwa

[Contact info on website](https://www.sonomacountyretirees.com)

## August 26th Membership Meeting Speaker

Joni Huntsperger will be the speaker at our Membership Meeting and will give us an update on what is happening with the Sonoma County Master Plan for Aging. This is a ten-year plan highlighting the community's most pressing needs and corresponding strategies for its aging population which is growing rapidly. There are 6 committees addressing different needs like housing, transportation, health and economic security (very relevant to us as we try to get COLA). See details on different committees on page 5. They can use more people on these committees and Joni can fill us in on details of time commitment for those who might want to be involved.

## Emergency Prep Help (EPH)

Seniors are the fastest growing demographic in Sonoma County and in California. They are also the most vulnerable in emergencies and disasters for a variety of reasons. EPH provides workshops for seniors that provide information and strategies on what to do to prepare for an emergency and what to do in an emergency. As part of the 2 session workshop, you get a go-bag with supplies and a great deal of information. They have workshops in various parts of the county. Information on the various workshops is available online at <https://www.emergencyprephelp.org/events>. They have workshops in August in Santa Rosa and Sebastopol, in September in Santa Rosa, Petaluma and Guerneville. More online. There are 2 sessions 2-3 weeks apart, each one being 2 hours. Anyone 55 and older can attend free.

These came from the Tulare retirees newsletter. I thought people might enjoy something a little lighter.

## Things to Ponder

1. If the No. 2 pencil is the most popular, why is it still No. 2?
2. Why do we drive on parkways and park on driveways?
3. Why do people say "heads up" when you should duck?
4. Why are there no 'B' batteries?
5. Why are you "in" a movie, but "on" TV?
6. Why is a "pair" of underwear one item?
7. When does it stop being partly cloudy and start being partly sunny?
8. Why do we press harder on a remote control when we know the batteries are getting weak?
9. Why do "slim chance" and "fat chance" mean the same?

## Ongoing Effort to Get COLAs

We are in a holding pattern after the presentation to the Board of Supervisors. They were very receptive to need for COLAs and referred it to County Council to look at ways legislation could allow them more flexibility in giving COLAs but the budget for 2025-26 has been approved without a COLA in it. It is still crucial that members participate in this effort by writing letters to the Board of Supervisors, attending Board meetings and participating in the public comment period. The BOS pays attention to this. SCARE Board member, Andre Bercut, will be coordinating these efforts. If you write to the BOS, (Board addresses below) please remember to cc him at [andre.bercut@gmail.com](mailto:andre.bercut@gmail.com), and add whether you are willing to be part of a team appearing at BOS meetings. When writing to your Board member, it is very important to state how the increase in the cost of living without a COLA has personally affected you.

SCARE Board members have met with all members of the Board of Supervisors and with the County CAO, Christina Rivera, to ask them to seriously consider giving retirees a COLA. Following are some of the points we made to the Board of Supervisor members when we met with them. You may want to include some of them in your letters.

- ♦ Sonoma County's Ad Hoc COLA which promises to keep retirees at 80 is not working. Sonoma County retirees have not been granted a cost of living increase since 2008, and those who retired after 2003, have never gotten a COLA. Other public agencies in California have automatic COLAs which means they get a 2 or 3% COLA every year. County said they would give COLAs to keep retirees at 80% of purchasing power.
- ♦ About half of retirees get \$2,500 or less—and sometimes much less. There are people who retired in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s when salaries were much lower compared to today's, so they have very low pensions. There are 765 retirees who retired before April 1999 who have lost 78% of their Purchasing Power as of March 2025, and they started out with very low pensions. To see chart, go to our website—<https://www.sonomacountyretirees.com/index.shtml>
- ♦ 32% of Safety retirements and 5% of General retirement are based on duty disabilities. They are younger, often with families and high health insurance costs, and they average \$1,000/month less than regular service retirements. They are many years away from being Medicare eligible.
- ♦ Having no COLA affects the County's ability to hire and retain employees.
- ♦ Sonoma County has a very high cost of living, but if retirees move, they often have very high health insurance costs unless they are Medicare eligible.
- ♦ As retirees age, their costs go up as their health deteriorates and they need to hire people to do what they did earlier. Or they may need to go into assisted living which is very expensive.
- ♦ The Board of Supervisors has shown that they care about older people as they adopted a comprehensive Master Plan for Aging, ensuring that the increasingly aging population can age with dignity and independence. But they seem to have forgotten about their own retirees.

**In addition to our discussion with the BOS about COLAs, we are also asking them to modifying the SCARE settlement agreement and increase their contribution for those impacted as it is due to decrease to \$200/month in July 2026.**

Email addresses for Board Members:

- District 1 — [rebecca.hermosillo@sonoma-county.org](mailto:rebecca.hermosillo@sonoma-county.org)
- District 2 — [david.rabbitt@sonoma-county.org](mailto:david.rabbitt@sonoma-county.org)
- District 3 — [chris.coursey@sonoma-county.org](mailto:chris.coursey@sonoma-county.org)
- District 4 — [james.gore@sonoma-county.org](mailto:james.gore@sonoma-county.org)
- District 5 — [lynda.hopkins@sonoma-county.org](mailto:lynda.hopkins@sonoma-county.org)

**There is a lot of pension information on the SCARE website at  
<https://www.sonomacountyretirees.com/pensions.shtml>.**

## JLMBC Report by Phyris Tobler

### Health Insurance Information

**Health Reimbursement Accounts Transferred to TASC — Do not throw away letter coming from TASC that includes debit card.** This only applies to the people under the SCARE settlement who have HRAs (retired before 7/1/16). The county finally made the deposit of the reallocated funds and TASC has mailed out the debit card along with information on how to register and use the TASC system. The amount reallocated to members is \$26.66. To access this money, you will have to use the debit card or file a new claim as any claims you had on file with P&A were not transferred to TASC. Remember that if you use the debit card on a bill that is more than \$26.66, you need to tell the vendor to just charge that amount to the card. You may want to file a new claim with TASC so that future amounts will be paid automatically. The other thing you will need to do is to set up your direct deposit information with TASC as that was not transferred either. Since the deposit was made so late, the service charge of \$2 is waived for July but will come out of your account in August so unless you file claim right away, you will only have \$24.66. The advantage of TASC over P&A is that the service charge is lower and they pay interest. For those of you who keep your balance to 0, the interest won't affect you but for those of you who were hired after 7/1/09 and have larger balances in your HRA to use for your health insurance, you will now accrue interest on these funds. It will show up on your online account.

#### **Steps for setting up online account with TASC (thanks to Ed Clites for this info):**

1. Login to [www.tasconline.com](http://www.tasconline.com)
2. Click the login button
3. Click on 'First Time Here/Sign-up'
4. Fill in the requested personal information including your 12 digit TASC ID which can be found on the back of your debit card (or call customer services at 877-401-9807)
5. You should now see your dashboard with a balance of \$26.66

#### **To file claim:**

1. Click on Request a Reimbursement (best to claim large amount so balance remains on file)
2. Fill in date of service, type of service, amount and provider
3. Upload verification document

If you need help, you can call 877-401-9807 (number is also on the back of your debit card). Be sure to identify yourself as a County of Sonoma new user.

If you just want to use your debit card with a vendor, you don't have to set up an online account. But if you file a claim, make it a fairly big one so that you don't have to do that again for a few years.

**Fitness Plans included in Insurance:** these include many if not most of the fitness centers in Sonoma County as well as other locations in the US. This is a valuable benefit as they are often expensive and exercise has been shown to be valuable for both physical and mental health.

**One Pass:** Kaiser is adding free membership in One Pass Fitness to their benefits for Medicare eligible retirees. One Pass is a health and wellness program that gives you access to gyms, fitness locations, studios, online workouts, brain health tools, and social events and activities. You can get more information at <https://www.youronepass.com/#gym-search-link>. There is a section with Frequently Asked Questions that gives a lot of information on program.

**Silver Sneakers:** Medicare recipients who are in the Anthem plan get Silver Sneakers which covers many fitness clubs for free. It covers places like 24 Hour Fitness, Curves, Planet Fitness, and more. This is a great savings. If you go to <https://silversneakers.com/>, you can put in your zip code for locations near you.

**Renew Active Fitness** is available through AARP/UHC. Again, it is free and covers a good number of fitness clubs in Sonoma County and elsewhere. Go to <https://www.uhcrenewactive.com/home> for locations near you.



## Sonoma County Master Plan for Aging

This is a ten-year plan highlighting the community's most pressing needs and corresponding strategies for it's aging population which is growing. Committees are still forming and they would like to have seniors involved. If you are interested in being on one of these committees or finding out more about what is involved, call Joni Huntsperger at 707 565-4560 or send email to [Jhuntsperger@schsd.org](mailto:Jhuntsperger@schsd.org). Joni will be talking about what is happening with this plan and the various committees at our August Membership Meeting. The 6 committees are shown below and full information on them is in the May Newsletter.

### Goals and Strategies

**Goal Area #1: Housing:** Increase the availability of preventive and supportive services to allow older adults and people with disabilities to age in place without concerns of safety and homelessness.

**Goal Area #2: Transportation:** Make accessible and safe transportation available for older adults and people with disabilities, regardless of where they live.

**Goal Area #3: Health:** Assist older adults and people with disabilities in accessing the health services and support they need to maintain and improve their health and well-being.

**Goal Area #4: Wellness, Equity, and Inclusion:** Ensure that older adults and people with disabilities can easily locate and access information, resources, and opportunities for greater social connection.

**Goal Area #5: Caregiving:** Reinforce the value of caregiving by improving the resources, support, and training for paid and unpaid caregivers.

**Goal Area #6: Economic Security:** Ensure basic needs are affordable and attainable for older adults and people with disabilities.

### Alphabet Soup by Bill Robotka

**ICPC:** The ICPC met on June 5th, and discussed the 2025 report to the Board of Supervisors (BOS). The 2024 "State of the Pension" report to the BOS is available at this link: <https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6895663&GUID=EAE0B5D2-56F9-44F9-A83A-F1C4F8F39F06&Options=&Search=>

Also, the 2024 report on the Pension COLA was discussed. You can download a PDF copy of that document at this link: <https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=14112755&GUID=8DD8CC8C-C41C-49FE-8FA5-EAD18D9895EF>

**NBCLC:** The Labor Day breakfast is set to happen on September 1st. SCARE is a sponsor of this and all SCARE members are welcome to attend.

#### 2025 Labor Day Breakfast & Fundraiser

Sep 01, 2025, 7:30 AM – 10:30 AM Santa Rosa, 1371 Neotomas Ave, Santa Rosa, CA 95405, USA  
The CLC's new event ("May Day") was a huge success. It was held in Petaluma on May 4th. Our members were invited to attend as we (SCARE) are one of the sponsors of the event.

CLC leadership has been supporting us in lobbying the BOS on COLA and Health benefit issues, and continues working with SCARE to develop a plan for this and to provide guidance on when/how to best support us.

SCCLO: No activity for SCCLO.

### Updating Contact Information

If you move or change your email or phone number, you need to give your **updated information** to the following organizations. They do not share information.

**SCARE** - send changes to Lou Maricle via email at maricles2@gmail.com, or address to 4720 Santa Rosita Ct, Santa Rosa, CA 95405, or call 707 538-7342. We also need changes of phone numbers and email addresses. SCERA, the Retirement Board, does not share information with us. And if we don't hear from you, this is what happens: Mail and newsletters were returned with no forwarding address for the following member - **Cecilia Proschold**. Board member, **Alix Shor**, attempts to contact these people by phone and/or email but has not been able to reach them so we have no way of contacting them. If anyone knows how to reach her, would you please contact them and ask them to contact Alix Shor at alixshor@sonic.net or 707 495-4992 or give her the number and she'll call them.

**SCERA** - You get your pension check from them. Contact them to report changes at 433 Aviation Blvd., Suite 100, Santa Rosa, CA 95403, or call them at 707 565-8100.

**Sonoma County Human Resources Benefits Unit** - They handle health, dental, and life insurance and send out **Annual Enrollment Booklets**. Contact them at 575 Administration Drive, 116C, SR, 95403, or [benefits@sonoma-county.org](mailto:benefits@sonoma-county.org)/ 707-565-2900

### SCARE has its own Facebook Page

This is a private (closed) group meaning that the public may not view the contents, and membership must be requested and approved. For those of you already on Facebook, it can be found by searching for Sonoma County Association of Retired Employees (SCARE)" or using the direct link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/socoretirees> To join the group, go to the page and at the top you will see a box that indicates "Join Group." Once we verify you are indeed a member of SCARE, or are a spouse of a member, you will be added.

Bob Bulwa and Paul Klonsky



### In Memoriam

Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family and friends of the following retirees:

Elsie Chretien

John Finkbohner

Kara Jacobs

Delores McCord

Ann Schneider

Mary Kay Delaney

Dennis Flynn

Charlotte Marchetti

Dianne Pajaud

Margaret Self



### Fact Checking Social Media Posts

There have been a lot of misleading posts on social media for a long time. But with AI, they are getting much more sophisticated. For instance, they now show photos of people saying and doing things that are not real but it looks like the person and sounds like them. Sometimes there are little clues that it is a fraud but not always. These then get circulated as if they are the truth.

**Snopes.com** is a website that tries to check these out and debunk the ones that are not true and it also shows ones that are true. This will not help if someone is out to scam you in particular but it will allow you to check things that are circulating on social media.

While there have been many warnings about scams, we have to be even more careful now as there are so many ways to mislead us.

For other major stories, circulated on the news or on social media, you can go to **FactCheck.org**. They cover stories that are happening on a national level and often go into a lot of detail.



You may be able to pay less for prescription drugs by skipping insurance and paying cash. Using discounts available from websites like [America's Pharmacy](#), [Blink Health](#), [GoodRX](#), [Optum Perks](#), [SingleCare](#), [RXSaver](#) (by RetailMeNot), and [WellRX](#) may make your costs lower than

## ***Congratulations New Retirees and New SCARE Members (in bold)***



Abke, Ronald	Human Services
<b>Albee, Bryan</b>	<b>Public Infrastructure</b>
Barajas, Megan	Human Services
<b>Barca, Tanya</b>	<b>Child Support Services</b>
Basurto, Reynaldo	Sheriff's Office
Bendik, Michael	Water Agency
Britton, Brian	Public Infrastructure
Burrell, Russell	Sheriff's Office
Campa, Juan	Sheriff's Office
Cortner, Jeffrey	General Services
<b>Field, Joanna</b>	<b>DHS</b>
Gardner, Shem	Probation
Hamill, Diane	Superior Court
Harrington, Tyra	Permit Sonoma
Hoffman, Todd	Permit Sonoma
Holton, Marcus	Sheriff's Office
Hopkins, Lois	County Administrator
Howell, Daniel	Health Services
Kabanuck, Michael	Probation
<b>Kinsey, Stacie</b>	<b>Human Services</b>
<b>Leddy, James</b>	<b>CDC</b>
Lobb, Janet	Probation
Miller, Mark	Information Systems
<b>Nelson, Kennith</b>	<b>Human Services</b>
Novak, Charles	Water Agency
<b>Parlato, Matthew</b>	<b>Sheriff's Office</b>
Post, Sharon	Sheriff's Office
Rickett, Holly	County Counsel
<b>Ruiz, Giselle</b>	<b>Human Services</b>
Spanier, Leon	Water Agency
Smith, Billy	Sheriff's Office
Tasseff, Kenneth	Health Services
Tiura, Katherine	Superior Court

### Continued

Toyoda, Ben	Information Systems
Trudeau, Cynthia	Probation
Walker, Mark	PRMD

### **Encourage Fellow Retirees to join SCARE!**

We only have about a third of retirees as members. When we are approaching the Board or Supervisors to ask for a COLA, we are in a much stronger position with more members. If you know any retirees who are not members, please encourage them to join. They can get a copy of our application form on our website at <https://www.sonomacountyretirees.com/application.pdf>

The Sonoma County Library has a large number of workshops available to the public from one on one Tech Help, Computer Basics, Genealogy research, legal advice, and many more. These are offered at different branches but if you sign up for the library newsletter at <https://sonomalibrary.org/stayinformed/signup>, you will get updates on what is available.

Additional money saving offers from the library: If you like audible books, you can get them free with Libby. Enjoy concerts, ballets, documentaries and master classes with Medici.tv. And more.

**Board and Membership Meeting Minutes  
can be viewed at our website**

### **SCARE Membership and Financial Information**

SCARE currently has 1708 members and 161 associate members for a total of 1869 members. We do not include our financial information in the newsletter, but if you are interested, contact me and I can provide you with a copy of our financial statement (contact information on page 2).

Phyris Tobler

Sonoma County Association of  
Retired Employees (SCARE)  
P.O. Box 5513  
Santa Rosa, CA 95402

Address Service Requested

### **General Membership Meeting August 26, 2025**

Join us at 12:30 for an in-person meeting at Finley Center, 2060 W College Ave, SR in the Cypress Room. There will be snacks and drinks and the opportunity to visit with friends.

#### **Vaccinations encouraged if attending in person**

For those of you who can't attend in person, join us at 1:00 pm for the meeting on Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/8954632781?omn=83007426292>, Meeting ID: 895 463 2781, Dial by your location: +1 669 444 9171 US.

### **MEMBERSHIP MEETING AGENDA**

- **PRESENTER JONI HUNTSBERGER FROM SONOMA COUNTY MASTERPLAN FOR AGING**
- **UPDATE ON COLA ACTIVITY**
- **FORMING A PAC (POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE)**
- **JLMBC REPORT**
- **SCCLO/NBLC/ICPC REPORT**
- **DRAWING FOR GIFT CARDS (3 for those at Finley and 3 for those on Zoom)**