

RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA



Santa Clara County Chapter 031
Newsletter

Volume 53 #05
May 2018

An Association of CalPERS Annuitants committed to the goal of helping all public employees maintain their physical and economic health during retirement

NEXT MEETING – May 30th, 2018 at HARRY'S HOFBRAU, 390 Saratoga Avenue at Stevens Creek Blvd.

No-host Lunch at 11:30 - Meeting at 12:30

**ISSUES RELATED TO
RETIREMENT FUNDING
AL DARBY, VICE PRESIDENT- RPEA**



Mr. Al Darby obtained his BA from San Francisco State University for Business and Psychology. He was an IT Professional at State Compensation Insurance Fund. He has been with RPEA from May of 2004 to the present.

He will try to address many of your concerns re CalPERS' prudence with our money. He is knowledgeable about the issues of retirement funding and will try to answer some of our concerns in his presentation.

REMINDER: There will be no regular meeting for the month of June. We will have the annual picnic on June 20th at Vasona Park, Peppertree Group Area. We have included the map to get to the Peppertree Group Area and the picnic flyer in this issue of the newsletter.

IN MEMORIAM: Our deepest sympathy to the families and loved ones of Barbara Atkins, June Dundon, Samuel Jacobs, Maria Oropesa, and John Thielmann.

They will truly be missed.

**A VERY WARM WELCOME TO
OUR NEW MEMBERS!**

Following are the names of new members – Inta Alberico, Jean Chrisco, James Darnell, Caremela Diaz, John Diaz, Karen Jenkins, Kenneth Marsh, Arthur Martinez, Erlinda Means, Doyle Murphy, Thieuanh Nguyen, Julia Petrola, Julia Ross and John Sheehan.

Welcome Everyone!

**SANTA CLARA COUNTY
INFORMATION DESK**

Thank you to the following members who staffed the Information Desk in April:
Linda Baum, Lupe Castaneda, Mary Chaboya, Michelle Cockerille, Gloria Courtney, Sara De Leon, Sue Farr, Judy Frey, Lydia Gonzales, Bob Hagele, Tom Heim, Vi Hill, Connie Jimenez, Sherrill Martinez, Kathy Miller, Alan Miramon, Mary Mitchell, Janet Motha, Gerri Nedley, Thu Nguyen, John Avery Palmer, Jean Platner, Joan Wahl, Carolyn Walsh, and Cathy Weisbrich.

Welcome to our new volunteer, Laura Levine! Thank you for volunteering.

THE HISTORY CORNER

Marianne Damon, Historian, RPEA Chapter 031 ALMADEN QUICKSILVER COUNTY PARK



Our trip this month is close to my home, and to my mother's family's properties. I

have many childhood memories of family gatherings out on Greystone Lane in Almaden, and still visit relatives "out on the lane". Greystone from the quarry was used to build the original San Jose Library (now the San Jose Museum of Art), Saint Joseph's Cathedral, and Stanford Memorial Chapel. When I was little, and we drove out to Almaden, I was always confused when we went to the older area, called New Almaden. Only later did I learn that New Almaden, the mining town, was named after the mercury mine in Almaden, Spain (producing in Roman times, and still going!). My childhood memories include a big dose of local greystone and mercury lore.

The Ohlone called this area Pooyi and gathered cinnabar from the mine for red ceremonial paint. The Spaniards and Mexicans saw this and knew that mining mercury ore would be profitable. Mercury from the ore was primarily used to extract gold and was important, as the growing world economy was becoming based on gold and silver. Mining began by Mexicans, and then by Americans, from 1847 to 1976. The Gold Rush accelerated the demand for mercury, and when the U.S. took California from Mexico, eastern businessmen succeeded in obtaining the New Almaden mines. In over 135 years of mining activity, 84 million pounds of mercury was produced,

making New Almaden one of the world's richest mines. Housing was provided for up to 1,800 miners and their families, including English Camp, established by Cornish miners, and Spanish Camp.

Santa Clara County acquired 4,163 acres of this mining land in 1976 and ended the mining operations. In the same period of time, our county also developed two other large parks, Grant Ranch and Sanborn. The aim for this park was to preserve the history of its mining past, and to promote appreciation for the biodiversity of this particular natural setting. There are 37 miles of hiking trails, 30 miles of equestrian trails, and 17 miles of bike trails. Dogs on leash are allowed. As you hike, you can see remnants of mining structures. All mine entrances have been sealed (not so when I was young!). This park is one of the best places to see wildflowers in April and May. A self-guided tour is available with 15 described points of interest. The trail, markers and brochure were developed as an Eagle Scout project by Sunnyvale Troop 466.

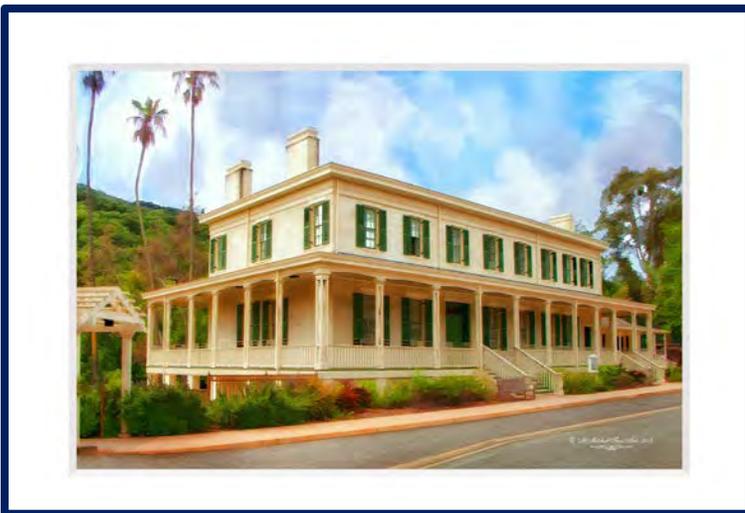
The park has three trailhead entrances. All entrances have bathrooms. As you drive south on Almaden Expressway and turn onto Almaden Road, the first entrance is off of Mockingbird Lane. Continuing on Almaden Road, you come to the historic town of New Almaden. Just past Casa Grande, the "big white house", is the next trailhead, marked by a white wooden bell tower which was the fire alarm and fire equipment station. Continuing to drive on Almaden Road, you pass beautifully serene Almaden Reservoir, then turn onto Hicks Road. Hicks takes you into thick oak stands and brings you to Guadalupe Reservoir. A bit past the reservoir, where Mt. Umunhum Road begins on one side, the Wood Road entrance is just off of Hicks on the other side. Park hours

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are 8 am to sunset, and there are no fees.

Casa Grande alone is worth the drive out this way. It was built in 1854 as the mining central office and became the home for the mine manager. It was the largest house in the town. I knew it as Club Almaden and The Opry House and attended some fun and raucous melodramas. Now it has been lovingly restored. As you enter, you step back in time and see the rooms close to how they were furnished and used. There is a gift shop with fascinating local history books and local art work. The docents are engaging and eager to share their knowledge. Then there are the several rooms of the Almaden Quicksilver Mining Museum, which can easily occupy up to an hour. The grounds are open for walks and picnics and can be rented for events. Two reunions of my Pfeiffer family relatives have been held here; the different branches of the family wore colored t-shirts, one year I was coral and one year, navy.



When Mary and I visited, we did a driving tour of the different park entrances and enjoyed seeing the historic landmark houses of the town and returned to Casa Grande to go through the museum (open Monday, Tuesday, Friday from noon to 4; Saturday & Sunday 10-4; closed Wednesday & Thursday). We remarked that a picnic on

the grounds would be nice—but, not having packed a lunch, we returned from the quiet past, drove by all the new houses (alas, no more Feed'n'Fuel—a favorite little steakhouse), and returned to the busy-ness of Blossom Hill and Almaden Expressway and lunched there. Later I had a memory of my young teenage girlfriends and I bicycling from Willow Glen out to the little country store on Almaden Road in the summer, eating popsicles and then bicycling back. It seemed like a long way, and now by car and with the expressway, it's just minutes...

If you make the trip, you might want to stop at Almaden Valley Nursery on your way back; it is a lovely little place to wander about. Here is the link to Almaden Quicksilver Park:

<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/parks/parkfinder/Pages/AlmadenPark.aspx>

And here is the link to Casa Grande:

<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/parks/parkfinder/Pages/Almaden-Quicksilver-Mining-Museum.aspx>

Did you check our web site?

By Constance Cravalho

Any time there is a serious last-minute change concerning an RPEA event, it will appear on the website as soon as humanly possible. Recently, we not only had a *change in date for the annual June picnic*, but we also had a *last-minute change from the Pavilion area to the Pepper Tree group area*. Always check the website whenever you hear of unforeseen changes. Our website can be updated instantly. While we strive to meet all contingencies, there may be an instance where we need to inform our membership of a last-minute change. It is always good business practice to check your website for up-to-date information.

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