



RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA

Santa Clara County Chapter 031 Newsletter

Volume 53 #09
October 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 – October 31st, 2018 at
HARRY'S HOFBRAU, 390 Saratoga Avenue
at Stevens Creek Blvd.**

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

SENIOR SCAM STOPPER PRESENTED BY THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA CONTRACTORS STATE LICENSE BOARD WITH JANE KREIDLER



In California alone, over \$17 Billion Dollars has been “scammed” from the seniors of our State. This represents 1 in 5 seniors who will be the victim of some type of fraud. The Senior Scam Stopper seminars have been offered throughout the State since 1999 in cooperation with legislators, State and Local agencies, law enforcement, district attorneys, and community based organizations. Jane Kreidler is a well versed, extremely knowledgeable presenter who will discuss what types of fraud are popular now. Her presentation on people who perform services for you is outstanding. The session will feature broader topics, including identity theft, auto repair, Medicare, foreign lotteries, and mail fraud. Not only does Jane discuss all of the above, she will provide the ways and means

to protect yourself by providing packets of information that you can use! Please come and hear this fascinating lady! Be Safe - Be Informed!

IN MEMORIAM: Our deepest sympathy to the families and loved ones of Helen Catton, Robert McIntyre, Preston Philips, and Scharlee Phillips.

They will truly be missed.

A VERY WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Following are the names of new members – Bol Amyang, Lauren Crisci, Gregory Dull, Claudia Eck, Joan Gatto, Julia Gonzales, Thomas Gonzales, Carole Hughes, Jennifer La, Audrey Magelky, Martin Reinders, Valerie Roble, Michael Ruhstorfer, Elaine Saulter, Carol Schulz, Barbara Watkins, and Antonia Wigham.

Welcome Everyone!



SANTA CLARA COUNTY INFORMATION DESK

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

We are so happy to have a new Volunteer. His name is Brian Mark and he is retiring effective 10/5 from the controller's office. Mr. Mark, thank you for volunteering!

THE HISTORY CORNER

**Marianne Damon, Historian, RPEA Chapter 031
CHRISTMAS IN THE PARK!**

My earliest Christmas memories include visiting the nativity display every year set up on the lawn in front of the Lima Family Mortuary in Willow Glen. It started out as a single scene built by Don Lima with a \$300 loan in the 1950's. I was born in 1951, and as I grew up, the displays grew in number. Soon, in addition to the nativity, there were snow scenes and characters that moved! Nowadays holiday displays are abundant, but Mr. Lima started the tradition in San Jose. When the increasingly popular set-up became too large for the neighborhood, in the 1970's Mr. Lima donated the display to the City of San Jose. It was then set up on the lawn of our original city hall at 1st and Mission Street (I don't remember visiting there). When that location became insufficient in the 1980's, Mr. Lima and a group of community leaders requested that the displays be moved to the current location at Plaza de Cesar Chavez. I would take my children downtown to see the displays almost every year. The city and the non-profit Christmas in the Park jointly managed the event. By 2011, even though extremely popular, the city couldn't afford to maintain the event or raise sufficient funds, and closure was being planned. Luckily, Christmas in the Park stepped up and took over, with the city still providing the location and the

warehouse space. They have been successful in increasing attendance each year—last year, 700,000 people visited this free community-building event!

This year Christmas in the Park will open on November 23 with the Tree Lighting Ceremony and Santa's arrival at 6 pm. The fifty-foot tree will have 99 strands of LED lights, all programmable and will even be able to display images! The hours are 9 am to midnight daily, and the last day will be December 25. Usually the event runs through New Year, but there is a competing event that needs the park, so the crew plans a record-setting break-down of five days instead of the usual two weeks! Set-up takes one month. The ice-skating rink and the carnival happen adjacent to and during the same time period as Christmas in the Park, but are run by separate organizations. There are some special events planned for this year. December 2 and 9, between 10 am and 2 pm, are Dog Days with Santa. Dogs are invited to come enjoy the park and take a photo inside Santa House—free with your own camera, or you can purchase a custom photo. Saturday, December 8 is "Stuff the Bus" day, sponsored by Southwest Airlines as a Toys for Tots benefit by the U.S. Marines Reserve. There will also be donation bins throughout the park all other days. Grinch Night is December 15 from 5:30 to 8 pm—rather secretive for now, but more info will be posted soon! Could the Grinch possibly ruin Christmas in the Park??? And there will be Breakfast with Santa at the Fairmont Hotel, ticket prices and times to be announced. A 5K Santa Run/Walk and a Kids' Fun Run (ages 2-7), costumes encouraged, will be held as a festive fund-raiser to kick off the season. The Community Stage will showcase family-friendly performances each evening and throughout the weekend days.

My four-year old grandson and four-month old granddaughter will be visiting me this Christmas. I'll be taking them to North Pole Plaza (sponsored by Kaiser Permanente) for photos with Santa (again, free with your camera or custom photos can be purchased), to see the model train, to send a penny through the penny press, and to take a photo in a giant San Jose postcard. Then we'll walk around and see a few of the displays that I remember from my childhood, and all of the new displays that have been added since—about 35 in all! Last year's new display was Bears on the Ice Pond, a very popular addition. The most popular display, by vote, is Bears' Log Cabin. Most of the animated displays are mechanical, but there is one computer-controlled display, The Twelve Days of Christmas. Next year will be the non-profit's 40th anniversary, and they are

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currently building their biggest display, a three-parter with elves making toys and loading a conveyor belt which takes the toys over to elves packaging them.

Mary (our newsletter editor and photographer) and I were invited to visit the Christmas in the Park warehouse and meet with Jason Minsky, the Executive Director. The City of San Jose's Central Service Yard, just across the street from History San Jose and Kelly Park, loans a 32,000 square foot warehouse to them. They have divided it in half, one side for storage and the other side for "let's work on stuff". When we appeared at the large bay door opening, we were greeted by the beautifully-lit Light Tower (originally donated by the local Rotary Club), and by Jason, our host for the tour. They are staffed with 3.5 ft's, some seasonal help, and contractors. They also rely on volunteers, usually high-school kids doing community service hours. They do have one regular retiree who comes in once a week to work on projects, and helps out more during "crunch time". They would love a few more skilled volunteers (you can sign up online at their website). As we carefully walked around the displays in progress and displays in restoration, he showed us The Lima Train, four cars built as a tribute to Don Lima. Two of the cars need donations to refurbish. We also saw work on the new Santa and Mrs. Claus' Environmentally Friendly House, showcasing green living, to be located on Environmental Way. Next, we saw last year's Dog/Cat Adoption House, which is being re-purposed to house either a Lego display or a holiday village (they bought nearly a hundred pieces at auction!). Some sizeable items have been donated by Barrango, a South San Francisco company that makes large-scale Christmas decorations for malls, and these are being worked into some new displays. We saw four smoke-damaged but lovely antique sleighs that are awaiting a creative idea and some elbow grease.

The event takes about one million dollars to put on. It brings in an estimated \$13 million in visitor spending to the city. For fund-raising they rely on donations, sponsors and vendors at the park. Over five hundred community groups sponsor and decorate a tree. Fees range from \$60 to \$600, depending on the site and the group. The trees have been donated by Orchard Supply Hardware, but with the sudden closing of OSH, a generous sponsor stepped in for a one-time save. Hopefully Lowe's, who bought and then closed OSH, will step up in years to come. The largest fund-raising event is Christmas in July, a live and silent auction and dinner. They also put in an appearance with their Train float in the Rose, White and Blue Parade on the 4th of July (the Rose

Garden area parade—my favorite!). Their newest sponsor is An Jan; I think they might be especially active during the Dog Days! Mary and I were impressed with the amount of work done by such a small staff, and by their dedication to continue and improve such a community treasure.

In the words of this wonderful non-profit: "Christmas in the Park is more than just a park filled with Christmas decorations - it is a community event that brings everyone together, creates a lifetime of memories, and is a great tradition for all."

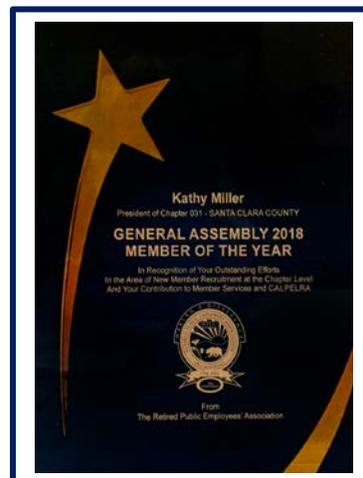
Their website is:

<https://www.christmasinthepark.com/default.aspx>



UPCOMING BAO OUTINGS

Bay Area Older Adults has several interesting activities coming up. Friday, Nov. 2: BAO's 10 Year Anniversary Celebration. Tuesday, Nov. 13: History, Science, Nature and Culinary Tour of Sausalito, a day trip with lunch and a visit to several places of historical interest. Friday, Nov. 16: Tea & Cheese Pairing Event. Friday, Dec. 14: Free Young at Heart Movie. Check out all of the activities on their website: <https://www.bayareaolderadults.org/> Events are open to non-members; better pricing is given to basic members and premium members.



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR CHAPTER PRESIDENT, KATHY MILLER, FOR RECEIVING THE RECOGNITION FOR HER HARD WORK IN RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS.

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DATED MATERIAL

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