CSU Reporter

California State University Emeritus
and Retired Faculty & Staff Association

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Inside this issue:

CSU-ERFSA Endorses Randy Cheek of RPEA in CalPERS Board Election

CSU-ERFSA has endorsed Randy Cheek, lobbyist and legislative advocate of the SEIU Local 1000 for the last 14 years and Director of Legislation for the Retired Public Employees Association (RPEA), in the CalPERS Board of Administration election taking place August 26, 2022 to September 26, 2022. As in the past, eligible voters may vote on paper, by telephone, or on the internet.

Only eligible retired CalPERS members, excluding survivors and beneficiaries, may vote in the election. If no candidate receives a majority vote in the election, a runoff between the two candidates with the most votes will be held from November 4 to December 5, 2022.

Randy Cheek has been endorsed by both RPEA and CSU-ERFSA for the CalPERS board retiree seat. Randy until recently was the RPEA legislative chair and a member of RPEA's ad hoc committee on CalPERS. During the election campaign he has stepped back from both of these in order not to have any conflicts of interest. He is running on a campaign to make CalPERS more transparent in its dealings. CalPERS is second largest pension system in the U.S. (after the federal government) and the second largest purchaser of healthcare (again after the federal government). He is running to protect pensions and lower healthcare costs.

Cheek spent 14 years working for SEIU Local 1000 as lobbyist and legislative advocate. He also spent three years, from 2002 to 2005, working for the California

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Investing In Retirement: Real Estate

By Barry Pasternack, Emeritus Prof. of Info Systems and Decision Sciences, CSUF, and Mark Hoven Stohs, Emeritus Prof. of Finance, CSUF

We plan to share general advice about investing after retirement during the next several issues of the CSU-ERFSA Reporter. Barry worked in financial planning in the past and Mark was a finance professor for 28 years. As a disclaimer, neither of us are currently registered financial planners or advisors, so decisions you make in the end are your own. Our goal is to provide ideas for thought. Should you have any topics for us to explore, please feel free to email either of us at bpasternack@fullerton.edu or mstohs@fullerton.edu.

In our June 2022 *Reporter* article, we focused on investing in the stock market as a way of preserving and growing one's estate. Now we focus on real estate investments.

There are at least six broad types of real estate investments: raw (unimproved) land, farmland, residential property (e.g. rental houses or apartments), commercial property (e.g. stores, shopping centers, hotels, office buildings, etc.), real estate

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From the President...

Dear Colleague,

I hope your summer is going well. I am pleased that our new Executive Director, Merry Pawloski, has "hit the ground running" and has already made a visit to Channel Islands to meet with the local emeriti chapter.

The only "hiccup" we have encountered is in changing the signatory on our accounts with Bank of America to reflect the new executive director appointment. First, trying to find someone at the Bank of America who is actually working at the branch and knows what we need to do to effect this change has been problematic. Depending on whom we speak with, we are told different stories as to the documentation that is needed.

One person I spoke with said all the association's officers need to come in person to change the account information. Trying to explain that our officers are located throughout the state and could not easily come into the bank branch to do this did not seem to have any sway with this individual. I then called another office at the bank and was told that this was not necessary, but I was given other requirements necessary to change the account signatories that were equally difficult to comply with. Our staff is still working on this issue, and I would not be too surprised if we eventually move our funds to a different financial institution.

FERP Distance Learning Stipend. I am still working on trying to get CSU to pay the $3,500 stipend to the FERP faculty who were teaching via distance learning that is delineated in article 31.7 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (see https://tinyurl.com/n7mecvmb/). This article specified that the stipend is to be paid to FERP faculty on a pro-rata basis if "allowed under CalPERS rules and regulations." As I reported in the last issue of *The Reporter*, when I enquired as to why FERP faculty were not getting the payment, I was initially told it was because CalPERS would not allow it.

Having been in the system for over 30 years and having had experience being told certain things were required that really were not, I was skeptical enough to contact CalPERS directly. When I did get to speak to the CalPERS representative who works in this area I was told that CalPERS had no problems in paying the stipend. I shared this information via email with both the CSU Chancellor and CFA President and, after waiting a month for a response, I sent a follow-up email. I did get responses this time from both CSU and CFA indicating that they were researching the issue and will respond once they complete this research. As soon as I learn the resolution of this issue, I will let you know.

Committee Appointment. I am pleased to announce that David Speak (Pomona) was approved by the Executive Committee as a member of the Health Benefits Committee. Among his leadership roles, David served several years on the ASCSU as both as a member of the Executive Committee and Chair of the Fiscal and Governmental Affairs Committee.

Fall State Council Meeting. Finally, while we hoped to be able to have a face-to-face State Council meeting at CSUDH in October 2022, the pandemic situation still remains unsettled enough that we decided to be cautious and hold the October meeting via Zoom. We are hoping that we resume holding in-person State Council meetings in spring 2023. Information on this meeting will be given in a future edition of *The Reporter*.

My best wishes to you and your family for a wonderful August and September.

Barry
Barry Alan Pasternack,
President, CSU-ERFSA

Turnout in the June Primary Election

Turnout in the 2022 California primary election was 37.7%, according to the U.S. Elections Project, which calculates turnout based on the voting eligible population. The measure takes all those who are 18 and over and excludes those who are felons or on probation, non-citizens, and adds in those who are eligible to vote but living overseas. An article in the Sacramento Bee found that in this particular primary election, those who were independents voted at about 2/3rds the rate of those who were registered Republicans or Democrats.

Health Benefits: LTC Update and Premium Increases

By David Wagner, CSU-ERFSA Health Benefits Director

Health Plan Open Enrollment. Health plan open enrollment is scheduled from September 19 - October 14, 2022. This is the opportunity for CalPERS members to enroll in a different health plan. Historically, very few retirees avail themselves of this opportunity, with most electing to stay with their current plan. 2023 premium adjustments for Medicare plans range from an increase of 14.83% for Anthem Medicare Preferred to a reduction of 7.27% for Kaiser Permanente Senior Advantage Out of State. The weighted average change is an increase of 3.69%. More information on 2023 health plan changes and 2023 premiums is posted to the CalPERS website.

Long-Term Care: Litigation Update. After CalPERS withdrew from the initial settlement, there has been little public chatter on the status of settlement discussions in the Wedding class action lawsuit. Should discussions not yield a viable settlement, the lawsuit could be scheduled for trial as early as this fall. However, until the attorneys for the plaintiff or CalPERS release an official statement on progress, or lack of progress, in negotiations there is little value in speculating on possible outcomes.

CalPERS does caution that “if you should cancel your policy, it may adversely affect your ability to participate in, or the recovery you may receive from, any future settlement or judgement….”

CalPERS also notes that if you opted out of the initial settlement, you are still part of the current legal action. “Since the Settlement is not going forward, that election no longer applies, and will not affect any ability you may have to participate in any future settlement or judgement in the case.”

Long-Term Care: Premium Increases. This November will usher in the second year of planned rate increases for the CalPERS long-term care program. As announced last year, rates will increase by 25% beginning in November, 2022.

Policyholders will receive a letter from CalPERS at least 60 days prior to the November deadline which will provide two options. Option 1 is to do nothing and not respond to the letter. The consequence is that your benefits remain the same and you will pay the increased 25% premium. Option 2 will decrease your benefits as identified in the letter which will offset the premium increase. If you select option 2 you must complete, sign, and return in a timely manner an election form. A preaddressed, postage-paid envelope will be enclosed for this purpose.

The cover letter does not provide current or new premium rates. This information is found on the Option 2 Election Form on the “Semi-Annual Premium” line.

Long-Term Care: Benefit Increase Option. Some LTC policy holders are receiving Benefit Increase Option (BIO) letters from CalPERS. Do not confuse this with the premium increase options discussed above. It is entirely separate. Every three years the LTC plan offers an opportunity to purchase additional coverage to policyholders not currently receiving benefits under their LTC policy. An increase in benefits will increase the premium. The letter from CalPERS notes the most important part to remember: “If you decline the option to increase benefit coverage twice during your participation in the LTC Program, you will not receive additional BIO offers.”

Members Needed

The Pre- and Post-Retirement Concerns Committee needs new members. The structure and the purpose of the committee are described on the CSU-ERFSA website:

The Pre- and Post-Retirement Committee consists of a Chair and from two to six members. The committee keeps the the membership informed about retirement program needs and strategies to improve members' retirement status. When appropriate, it coordinates its efforts with those of the Legislative Affairs Committee. The committee also consults with campus affiliates on the development of pre- and post-retirement programs. The Chair of the Pre- and Post-Retirement Committee serves on the State Council.

If you have questions and are interested in the work of the committee, please let the present chair know at: donahue_thomas@ymail.com.

New Members: Half Price Membership In First Year!

A special HALF-PRICE MEMBERSHIP is being offered for a limited period to all CSU retirees by the California State University Emeritus and Retired Faculty Association (CSU-ERFSA), the ONLY ASSOCIATION solely dedicated to supporting and improving CSU retiree benefits.

To learn more about CSU-ERFSA please visit our website at csuerfsa.org.

DETAILS: Send your check for this offer to CSU-ERFSA, 18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA 91330-8339 in the amount below. Your half-price membership will be valid for 12 months from the date it is received. Thereafter you will be billed at the normal rate. This offer EXPIRES Dec. 31, 2022

Gross Monthly CalPERS Benefit	Dues for the First Year
Less than $3,000	$30
$3,001 - $3,600	$36
$3,601 - $4,300	$42
$4,301 - $5,300	$48
$5,301 - $6,300	$54
$6,301 and above	$60
Donor Member	$66 and up

Update on CalPERS Reimbursement of Part B Premiums

By John G. Kilgour, CSU East Bay ERFSA

This is an update of an article that last appeared in the September 2020 Reporter. If you are already receiving your CalPERS reimbursement of Medicare Part B premiums, or if you are/were other than a State or CSU employee, you don't need to read this. If you are a State or CSU employee and you are not being reimbursed for Part B premiums, you should. There may be free money available. Quite a bit of it.

The Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003 became effective 1/1/06. Part II of the Act established the Medicare Advantage (a/k/a Senior Advantage and Medicare Supplement). It also changed the way in which Medicare Part B premiums are calculated by introducing the Income-Related Monthly Adjusted Amount (IRMAA). Beginning in 2007, Medicare Advantage beneficiaries earning more than specified amounts in Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) would pay more than the standard premium for coverage. The MAGI consists of the Adjusted Gross Income from our income-tax filings plus any tax-free interest or earnings.

The IRMAA thresholds first established in 2007 were indexed based on the percent increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Since the Great Recession of 2008, and until last year, price inflation was quite low. For 2020 it was 1.4%. For 2021, it jumped to 5.9%. It will increase to 8.6% in 2022!

The IRMAA is paid in addition to the standard Medicare Part B premium, which is $170.10 per month for 2022. The thresholds and IRMAAs in 2022 are:

Single, Widower, etc.	Married Filing Jointly	Part B IRMAA	Part D IRMAA
$91,000 – $114,000	$182,000 – $228,000	$68.00	$12.40
114,000 – 142,000	228,000 – 284,000	170.60	32.10
142,000 – 170,000	284,000 – 340,000	272.20	51.70
170,000 – 500,000	340,000 – 750,000	374.20	71.30
More than 500,000	More than 750,000	408.20	77.90

These data are provided on page 3 of the annual "Social Security Administration, Important Information" (formerly "benefit notice") mailed to each Part B enrollee (and separately to your spouse) each November. They are adjusted (usually increased) annually based on the change in the CPI in the third quarter of the current year compared to the same quarter in the previous year.

The notice also includes a Part D (prescription drug) IRMAA, shown above, but not discussed here as it is not reimbursed by CalPERS.

The 1997 Balanced Budget Act requires that the beneficiaries (us) pay 25% of the cost of Medicare Part B. The remaining 75% is paid from the federal General Fund. To achieve this, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) updates the threshold amounts each September for the following year.

CalPERS reimburses State and CSU retirees automatically for the $170.10 per month standard Part B premium ($340.20 for a couple filing jointly). **However, it does not automatically reimburse us for the additional Part B IRMAA premium.** We have to make the initial application. After that, CalPERS sends us an annual reminder letter. **However, we then have to reapply each year**.

If your MAGI is over $91,000 (individual) or $182,000 (married, filing jointly) in 2022, and you apply for an IRMAA reimbursement, the increase will appear as a credit on the left side of your CalPERS pension warrant. It is labeled "Medicare Reimbursement." If you apply late and/or if it takes a while for CalPERS to process the request, there may be an additional entry preceded by an asterisk indicating that it is a "one-time adjustment" for earlier months.

The amount of the reimbursement may not exceed the difference between the maximum employer contribution and the amount of premium for the health plan in which you are enrolled, or the Medicare Part B premium, whichever is lower. The premiums vary by location. The IRMAA reimbursement does not apply to any late fees, penalties or interest. Nor is it available to non-State and non-CSU CalPERS members.

To apply for the IRMAA reimbursement, write a brief cover letter requesting reimbursement for the Part B premium over the standard premium adjustment and send it, along with the SSA's annual benefit notice (all of it) for you and your spouse to: CalPERS Health Account Management Division Services Section; Attention Medicare Administration; P.O. Box 942715; Sacramento, CA 94229-2715.

Beginning this year, CalPERS requests (requires?) that we submit its "cover sheet" with a large bar code on the bottom. It is unclear (to me) whether this is to replace of our own cover letter or is in addition to. I sent both.

If you tossed or misplaced all or part of the annual Social Security benefit notice (as I once did) you can get a replacement copy from your local Social Security Administration office. (I used the SSA office at Southland Shopping Center in Hayward. They were very helpful. No hassle. No charge).

Yes, you can apply retroactively for IRMAA reimbursements for past years for which you were eligible but did not apply. I don't know whether a local SSA office can provide benefit notices for past years. If you find out, let me know (john.kilgour@csueastbay.edu).

If you have not yet applied for an IRMAA reimbursement, and your MAGI is over $91,000 (individual) or $182,000 (couple filing jointly), go for it. An IRMAA reimbursement for 2022 is $68 per month for an individual. For a couple that would be $136. That sums to an annual $816 per year for an individual and to $1,632 for a couple. That's on top of the standard Part B adjustment. If you earned more than $114,000 (individual) or $228,000 (couple), your Part B IRMAA will be more. Thank you, CalPERS!

ASCSU Report: Policy Issues Abound for This Year

By Jerry Schutte, CSU Northridge, Emeriti Academic Senator

The last meeting of the ASCSU for the 2001-2022 academic year took place May 16-17th. While the next meeting will not be until September, this summer marks the transition to a new 2022-2023 ASCSU Executive Committee in which Beth Steffel (San Bernadino) is chair, Thomas Norman (Dominguez Hills) vice chair, Mark Van Selst (San Jose State) secretary, while Elizabeth "Betsy" Boyd (Chico) and Adam Swenson (Northridge) are members-at-large.

The Executive Committee, acting on behalf of the entire senate during the summer, continues to work on assigning senators to committees and choosing committee chairs. As of this month, Simon Rodan (San Jose State) has been chosen to chair the Academic Affairs committee, Steve Rein (San Luis Obispo) will chair Fiscal and Governmental Affairs, Tracy Dawn Hamilton (Sacramento State) will chair Academic Preparation and Educational Programs, and Kris Bezdecny (Los Angeles) will chair Faculty Affairs.

Policy issues also abound as the chancellor's office and Board of Trustees continue their progress with Interim Chancellor Jolene Kester, former president of CSU Northridge. As evidence of those issues, the July Board of Trustees meeting witnessed updates on two important fronts. First, the independent review and evaluation of the Title IX and executive compensation is in process with suggestions expected for significant change, one of which has already taken place, as the board voted to deny "retreat" rights to any administrator found guilty of misconduct.

Second, since the 2022-2023 recurring budget allocation for the CSU fell short by nearly half the CSU request, two significant issues are being considered. One is a systemwide $50 million shortfall that will be passed pro rata to the 23 campuses to determine where cuts should take place to cover this amount. As well, Steve Relyea, system-wide chief financial officer, has offered a revised schedule for budget planning in which the CSU budget request will be voted on in September, rather than November, as in the past. This action will give the various advocates for the CSU significantly more time to lobby relevant decision-makers, starting with the Department of Finance, in advance of the governor's January budget request to the legislature.

The Executive Committee is also working on the various issues associated with AB 928 and the single pathway for transfer from the California Community Colleges (CCC) to both the CSU and the UC, as well as evaluating AB 927 requests for CCC bachelor's degrees. In addition to continuing work on bills already passed, the committee is watching bills still in process, such as AB 1602 and AB 1377 (grants for student and faculty housing), AB 940 (Mental Health Services Expansion), and AB 1746 (the Cal Grant Reform Act), all of which must survive (state) Senate appropriations committee votes in August.

The next ASCSU meeting is on September 8-9, 2022, in Long Beach, which at the present time is intended to be in-person for the first time in two and a half years. We will keep you apprised.

If anyone has questions on any of these issues, do not hesitate to contact me.

CSU-ERFSA New Members

Chico – Janet L. Ellis
Richard L. Ford
Debra A. Roth

East Bay – Lettie Ramirez

Fullerton – Michelle C. Lucio

Long Beach – Siobhan McClure-Rose

Pomona – Jeffery S. Mio
Amanda H. Podany

Sacramento – James T. Mackey

San Bernardino – Teresa Dodd-Butera*
Barbara W. Sirotnik

San Diego – Sanford I. Bernstein*
Thereasa A. Cronan

San Jose – Jo Farb Hernandez
Lynda A. Heiden
Belle W.Y. Wei

San Marcos – Judith A. Downie*

Sonoma – Aaron Almendares-Berman
Viki L. Montera-Heckman
Murali C. Pillai

* Designates Lifetime Member

Medicaid Weighs Attaching Strings to Nursing Home Payments to Improve Patient Care

By Susan Jaffe, Kaiser Health News

The Biden administration is considering a requirement that the nation's 15,500 nursing homes spend most of their payments from Medicaid on direct care for residents and limit the amount that is used for operations, maintenance, and capital improvements or diverted to profits. If adopted, it would be the first time the federal government insisted that nursing homes devote the majority of Medicaid dollars to caring for residents.

The strategy, which has not yet been formally proposed, is among several steps officials are considering after the covid-19 pandemic hit vulnerable nursing home residents especially hard. During the first 12 months of the pandemic, at least 34% of the people killed by the virus lived in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities even though residents of those facilities make up fewer than 1% of the U.S. population.

Medicaid, the federal-state health insurance program for low-income people, pays the bills for 62% of long-term care

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Pre- and Post-Retirement Concerns: Check Your Mail!

By Thomas Donahue, SDSU, Chair, Pre- and Post-Retirement Concerns Comm.

Two items now available to you (both in e-mail, and one as well in snail-mail) may warrant a second or third look. The first, found on the CalPERS website, is the notice of Annual Health Plan Changes.

Health Plan Changes. For 2023 the news is that two Basic HMO and EPO (exclusive provider organization, like an HMO) plans from Blue Shield will expand into rural northern and central California counties. Further, in the Medicare supported plans, there is a reduction in Anthem Blue Cross for acupuncture and chiropractic co-pays, and in the Kaiser Permanente Senior Advantage plans there is a new $0 copay plan available for most services, as well as a new quarterly allowance for over the counter medications and other mobility and home care supplies. There are also proposed benefit design changes for reproductive and fertility health equity policies, for hearing aids, and for the policy involving shifts in primary care providers among CalPERS-supported PPOs.

You may recall that a preferred provider organization allows you to choose a specialist without a referral from a primary care physician.

The second document, also found on the CalPERS website (but CalPERS will mail it to you as a booklet) and entitled the 2022 Health Benefit Summary, contains the "Notice of Rates and Employer Contributions." Once a person arrives at the age at which there is Medicare support, these programs—as you might expect—are outstanding.

For instance, do check for comparison the figures for the Kaiser Permanente Senior Advantage program; you will find it to be extraordinarily helpful in its design and administration. In 2021 Kaiser promised that for the current year, their premiums would be lower than the national averages, and this was of course welcome news.

You might in addition cast a sharp eye on the recent changes in the CalPERS PPO programs PERSCare, PERSChoice, and PERSSelect. For 2022 these have been reconfigured as follows: PERSCare is now the Platinum program, available everywhere, and Choice and Select have been combined into the Gold program, available only in California. Notice also that these are still administered by Anthem Blue Cross; when one relies on these as Medicare-supported programs they, just as the others funded in the same way, are welcome and helpful.

The CalPERS and Anthem connection is of long standing. Those familiar with the internal operations of CalPERS report that a long-term partnership with an outside provider only survives because CalPERS believes that the arrangement improves in service reliability and costs each year. Ordinarily a long standing and well thought-out arrangement between CalPERS and a health provider is a good thing, with the recent difficulties between CalPERS and its long term care program being a rather damaging counterexample.

You might check at https://tinyurl.com/2p8anfjr in part to see what has been approved for the CalPERS-Anthem arrangement for 2023.

Further, you can go to https://tinyurl.com/2b5dt4fk to see this year's first joint publication in this partnership. Keep in mind that this is a PPO, which has its own distinct value once Medicare support is available for retired clients.

Moving Out of State? The materials from CalPERS are also quite informative and useful for those contemplating a move to another state away from California in retirement. Of course, if you are one of those haunted (for example) by Robert Redford's line in Jeremiah Johnson—"It should have been different"—and if you are tempted to move into one of those states which have a larger proportion of angry white males, you will need a detailed understanding of how to go about it.

The CalPERS website "Thinking About Moving Out of California in Retirement" cautions you to change the withholding for California state taxes, to change your address and direct deposit arrangement, and naturally to consult the Health Plan Search by Zip Code just in case your move involves changing an HMO to a PPO. And that move might involve just such a change, so you must plan very carefully in advance.

The takeaway lesson is: the recent CalPERS mailings have important news and information, and you shouldn't disregard them. For comments and suggestions about this column, write donahue_thomas@ymail.com.

CSU-ERFSA Endorses Randy Cheek of RPEA

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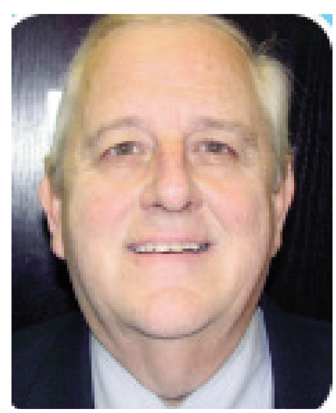
State Lottery as legislative liaison. He has a BA in communications from Sacramento State University.

The other two candidates in the race are Tim Behrens of the Department of Developmental Services and Yvonne Walker of the Department of Justice. While both are good candidates, the CSU-ERFSA executive committee believes that Randy Cheek will be the best representative for retirees on the CalPERS board.

There were to be two other elections for the CalPERS board of administration in late summer and fall, but both Theresa Taylor, an incumbent, and Kevin Palkki were unopposed. Both will serve four year terms starting January 16, 2023.



Randy Cheek of RPEA, CSU-ERFSA's endorsed candidate in the CalPERS board election

Retirement and Summer Cruising

By Mark Hoven Stohs, PhD, Emeritus Professor of Finance, CSUF

It's not yet time for back–to–school and stories about we did over the summer. In fact, school's out forever. We're retired. That's a strange feeling after 66 years of some form of school. Indeed, sometimes it almost feels like we've never left grade school.

My wife and I did something special for our retirement. We took the longest trip we've ever taken. This is our story about what we did this summer as a follow-up to our retirement.

My wife and I made it through all the campus, CSU, CalPERS and Social Security hoops – and officially retired near the end of May. We promptly flew to Florida for a few days and hopped on a cruise to Halifax, Iceland, and the UK. The cruise included many sea days. We wondered, would these sea days "work"? What would we do? Would it feel like retirement? It was a repositioning cruise, which explains the many sea days and the lower cost. It was significantly less expensive per day than "normal" cruises. For cost comparison, we have a future similar cruise coming up – the total cost of the 20+ day cruise is about the same price as the flight home (with good seats).

Sea days? I liked them a lot, they felt like a good preparation for "real" retirement. My wife didn't. Every sea day you have to ask yourself, what do I do today? Read, relax, plan for the next meal, go to the line-dance lessons, attend the nightly entertainment? After three days of sailing, one might ask, what DID I do? But then I remember, I'm retired and on vacation, so who cares. I don't have to teach tomorrow, or prepare for a big meeting. In fact, there's nothing on my schedule but doctor and dentist appointments when I return home. I now have a clue what it's like to go through retirement without a schedule. Kinda nice. I try not to think about accomplishing anything, aside from realizing that I've made it through another day, even if I'm not sure what day or month it is.

We had planned on taking on a "connecting" cruise, a two–week stint to the fjords of Norway, presumably including a stop in Longyearbyen, the northernmost, continuously occupied city on earth. However, the cruise line let us know that the Longyearbyen stop was cancelled, and allowed us to cancel the Norwegian experience. So we did, and spent a couple of sea days organizing the rest of our trip. We decided on a two–week Mediterranean cruise beginning in Rome, through Greece, Turkey, Montenegro (Kotor) and then back to Barcelona. So we had to rebook our time in London, get new flights from London to Rome and then Barcelona to London for our planned flight back to sunny California. We used our frequent flyer miles to fly business class with lie–flat seats on the return trip from London to Chicago. It turned an expected unpleasant experience into something comfortable and easy.

Cruise lines now have phone or table "apps" for unlocking your cabin door, ordering food, and checking your bill. While useful, they need work. Because we cut one cruise "short," the app caused headaches for the rest of our trip. For example, when we were cruising in the Ionian Sea, the app told us we were on another cruise ship somewhere in the North Sea off Norway. It's fun to be in two different places at one time.

We also experienced perfect weather during our whole trip – that was wonderful and unexpected – usually in London it is cloudy or raining. We had many hot days in the Mediterranean, though not the scorchers of mid–July. When people say that "teachers" have it easy because they have the summer off – they don't know about the lives of college professors. Yes, we've taken a few month–long vacations during those years, but very few. The summer is normally a time to get serious research done, along with some additional teaching. The long trip was great, though we were happy to get home to our now kidney ravaged ragdoll cat, Sabatini.

The most interesting natural feature of the whole trip was Þingvellir National Park in Iceland (pictured above right). That land separates the North American tectonic plate from the European plate very dramatically and is also the location of the first parliament ever held in 930 (by the Norwegians) leading to the Icelandic Commonwealth of today. The plates move apart about 1" each year.

Iceland is filled with natural wonders due to its volcanic and tectonic activity, and is a good bit like the Eastern Sierra in California, and both Haleakela National Park and Volcanoes National Park in Hawaii. There are also many waterfalls and geysers. It's well worth a visit; though like many places, one wonders why we travelled almost 4,500 miles to see places that remind us of home. It's really hard to beat living in SoCal.

Thingvellir National Park in Iceland
(North American plate at left)

After watching *The Vikings* series on TV, we wanted to experience some Viking ruins. Since most of their settlements were built with wood, not much remains in Greenland, Iceland or Great Britain. We visited the Jarlshof ruins in the Shetland Islands. Those ruins, pictured on page 11, date back to 2,500 B.C. Norse (Viking) era. Remains from that era used to cover most of the site, and it is believed the Norse inhabited the site continuously from the ninth to the 14th centuries. Jarlshof was the first of many ruins we visited, including Pompeii, Ephesus, the Athenian Agora, Knossos on Crete, remains of the Minoan civilization dating to 2,000 B.C., and Akrotiri on Santorini (pre–Minoan ruins dating to 5,000 B.C.).

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Survey of the Value of CSU-ERFSA Research Grants

By Marshelle Thobaben, CSU-ERFSA Grants Committee Chair

Since 1997, the CSU-ERFA Charitable Foundation has awarded 82 grants for a total of $77,371. We surveyed past CSU-ERFSA grant recipients to gain a fuller understanding of the benefits of the small grant program. A brief synopsis of each recipient's response is listed below. The effects of COVID epidemic restrictions on many of the projects is evident. Every grant recipient expressed strong gratitude to the CSU-ERFA Foundation for its support of faculty and staff research & creative projects.

The first half of this report appeared in the June 2022 issue of *The CSU-ERFSA Reporter*.

Anna Hamre, Fresno, received her grant for partial funding of a concert highlighting homelessness in Central California, but it had to be canceled due to the pandemic. Her grant was then used to partially compensate the professional musicians who reserved the weekend for the performance.

Susana Hernández Araico, Pomona, used her grant to support her participation in the biennial conference on the Spanish baroque playwright Calderón, in Vienna. After being postponed due to the pandemic, it was held in October 2021. Her paper has been submitted for publication in the selected proceedings.

Isabel Kaprielian, Fresno, used her grants for research at the National Archives in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, for her book, *Orphan Survivors of the Armenian Genocide*. It was about the healing process of children who had survived the Armenian Genocide. The Armenian Relief Association of Canada brought 109 orphan boys to Canada where they settled on a farm/orphanage, just west of Toronto, Ontario.

Elizabeth Kenneday, Long Beach, used her first grant to travel to research her book, *Regarding Mono Lake: Novelty and Delight at an Inland Sea, 2014.* It was described as the "first cultural and art history of the Mono Basin." Another grant enabled her to purchase costumes and props for an international collaborative art installation, with Canadian artist Susan Malmström, at the Ross Creek Centre for the Arts in Nova Scotia, Canada. Her final grant allowed her to acquire specialized materials in the production of an artist's book, *Roadside Botanicals—a field guide* that uses a contemporary photographic approach to traditional botanical prints in depicting wildflowers that often grow in disturbed areas, such as construction zones, abandoned agricultural fields and along roadsides.

Daniel Kessner, Northridge, used his grant to partially support his CD: *Daniel Kessner: Chamber Music*; Centaur Records CRC 3478. In 2013, the Conservatório do Porto hosted a "Festival Kessner," in which he and his wife performed alongside local musicians, including a gorgeous presentation of his song cycle by soprano Cecília Fontes and pianist Lúcia Rodrigues, which was recorded in 2014. The rest of the CD was recorded later in France and California. The CD and a live concert video are available on YouTube.

David R. Maciel, Dominguez Hills, used his grants to do research on Mexico's cultural icon: German Valdes, Tin Tan, which was published in the journal *Voices of Mexico* [Mexico], Issue 101, Summer 2016, *entitled: Tin Tan, Mexico's First Postmodern Icon.* https://tinyurl.com/yhsej2ha

Merry Pawlowski, Bakersfield, used her grant for travel expenses to New York to study rare materials in the Joseph Conrad archive housed in the New York Public Library, including the typescript of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, which has never been scanned and digitized. These are vital for completion of her book, *Mapping, Space, and the Rise of Commodity Culture in Joseph Conrad's Congo*.

Katharine Davies Samway, San Jose, used her grant for the transcription of interviews with K-8 teachers about the impact of the COVID pandemic on their teaching. She is in the process of authoring a manuscript for publication.

Art Shulman, Northridge, used his grant to make a 2022 Zoom recording of his play, BIAS. The play concerns a college professor accused of discrimination and bias by a student he had reported to Student Affairs for cheating. His grant paid a technical person to edit and advise, and to compensate actors. It is available free on YouTube at: https://tinyurl.com/mr3bcw2u

David R. Sprung, East Bay, completed the composition of his 2nd string quartet. The renowned Delgani String Quartet recorded it for YouTube. His grant partially funded the fee required. It is available at https://youtu.be/OBUUCPNYqzo.

David Stronck, East Bay, used his grant to help fund the collection of data on newly planted native trees at the Masonic Retirement home in Union City, CA. The data are the basis for a map to find areas most conducive to tree growth and serve as the baseline for research on the best way to restore a native forest of the Live Oak in the interior hills of the coastal environment.

Catherine Turrill Lupi, Sacramento, altered her original plans due to the COVID epidemic and used her grant to cover expenses related to production of a video about Plautilla Nelli (broadcast by PBS in Fall 2021). She wrote the entry about Plautilla for a scholarly website about women artists (launched in March 2022).

Edythe Walker, Fullerton, authored the paper, "Partnerships for Adults or Cultivation of Children? The Functions of Early 21st Century U.S. Families" and presented it at the Theory Construction and Research Methodology Workshop of the National Council on Family Relations," November 2020. She submitted her manuscript to the *Journal of Family Theory and Review*. Her grant allowed her to buy a printer, books, and for travel expenses for a conference meeting in Minneapolis, where she will be a discussant at a workshop.

Legislative Report: CalPERS' Investments Lose 6.1%

By Robert Girling, Sonoma, CSU-ERFSA Director of Legislation

CalPERS' Investments lose 6.1%. CalPERS announced its first annual investment loss since the Great Recession on Wednesday, reporting a preliminary drop of 6.1% for the fiscal year that ended June 30. Stocks and bonds lost the most value among the pension fund's holdings, following global trends, according to a CalPERS statement.

Private equity and real estate investments gained, helping avoid a larger loss, the statement said. The loss left the fund with $456 billion, or 72% of what it would need to pay all its long-term obligations. That's down from 80% a year ago, when the fund was worth $469 billion.

Public pension plans across the country lost money due to the public market volatility of the last fiscal year, according to an analysis by the New York-based nonprofit Equable Institute. The nonprofit recently estimated the plans lost an average of about 10.4%.

The loss is attributable to a host of factors including the disruptions to the world economy attributable to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the rising federal interest rates. Nevertheless, CalPERS' diversification of holdings has protected our assets from a worse scenario and ensured that it is able to meet current pension payouts.

Legislation

The governor has signed two relevant bills, AB 928 and AB 1377:

AB 928 Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act of 2021: Associate Degree for Transfer Intersegmental Implementation Committee requires the 23-campus California State University and nine undergraduate campuses of the University of California system to establish a joint singular lower-division general education pathway for transfer. It also requires the California Community Colleges to place students who declare a transfer goal on an associate degree for transfer pathway for their intended major.

AB 1377 Student Housing Plans (McCarty) requires the CSU system, and requests the UC system, to conduct a student housing needs assessment for each campus and create a student housing plan outlining how projected student housing needs will be met.

Pending Legislation

AB 2371 Public Postsecondary Education: CSU: Tuition proposes that the California State University shall not charge tuition or mandatory systemwide fees for enrollment at a campus for up to two academic years, to any California Community College transfer student who has completed an associate degree for transfer and received a fee waiver, subject to appropriation through the state budget.

AB 2692 Public Postsecondary Education: Priority Registration for Members and Former Members of the Armed Forces of the U.S calls upon the California State University, each community college district and the University of California to grant priority registration for enrollment to any member or former member of the Armed Forces or State Guard of the United States who is a resident of California and who has received an honorable or a general discharge. The bill would entitle them to four academic years after the member has left state or federal active duty to be used within 15 years of leaving state or federal active duty.

SB 1173 Fossil Fuel Divestment. This bill would have prohibited CalPERS and CalSTRS from investing in the top 200 fossil fuel companies, and provided an ample window for divestment in those fossil fuel companies to 2027. After narrowly passing the California State Senate, the Legislature's fossil fuel divestment bill, SB 1173, recently met a silent death in the Assembly, where it didn't even come before a public hearing. Instead, a single Democratic lawmaker, Public Employment and Retirement Committee chair, Jim Cooper [D; Elk Grove] refused to take up the legislation in his committee, which it needed to pass in order to advance to the Assembly floor for a full vote. It was an anticlimactic defeat for a bill supported by more than 100 environment and climate-focused groups, ERFSA and many others including the state Treasurer's Office, the city of Los Angeles and the California Federation of Teachers.

CalPERS Record on Fossil Fuel Divestment Proposals. A report on CalPERS voting record on shareholder climate resolutions at fossil fuel companies found that CalPERS voted against 15 such proposals and abstained on one proposal. CalPERS' proxy voting decisions from 2022 reveals its opposition to fossil fuel companies reducing greenhouse gas emissions, reporting on human rights, ceasing exploration activity, decommissioning oil and gas infrastructure, and transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

The Aspiring Teacher Scholarship. This is a scholarship program for students pursuing bilingual teaching credentials at California State University, Bakersfield and California State University, Fresno. The scholarships provide support for students enrolled in post-BA teacher education programs who are interested in serving the people of California by working with English language learners and bilingual students. The program, funded by an anonymous donor, has awarded $1 million in scholarships to help address the shortfall of bilingual teachers in the Central Valley. CSU-ERFSA members are among those who serve as evaluators of the hundreds of applicants.

Long-Term Care Lawsuits

A report from Kaiser Health News (KHN) notes that attorneys in California and some other states say that they regularly see nursing home lawsuits against family and friends, seeking to recover debts the residents of nursing homes have incurred. The industry, according to consumer attorneys, has developed a strategy of pursuing family and friends of patients despite federal law enacted to protect them from debt collection. In Monroe County, NY, where Rochester is located, 24 federally licensed nursing homes filed 238 debt collection cases from 2018 to 2021 seeking about $7.5 million. In nearly a third of the cases that KHN reviewed, the nursing homes won a default judgment because the person being sued failed to respond. These lawsuits have occurred in California, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, New York, and Ohio.

Investing In Retirement: Real Estate

(Continued from page 1)

investment trusts (REITs), and limited partnerships. One major distinction between investing in stocks and investing in real estate is that while common shares of a particular company are indistinguishable from one another, each piece of real estate is unique. Another is that while the corporations pay income taxes, an individuals who own real estate generally must keep their own financial records and file state and federal tax returns that include the operation of the real estate (property).

One interesting question is which asset class (real estate or stocks) gives a higher rate of return? There is no easy answer, because rates of return depend so much on the time frame one adopts. An article worth reading contrasts these two types of investments: https://tinyurl.com/yc6pa46f. While the article claims that stocks have substantially higher returns, the real estate and stock returns are measured across different time frames. The authors do support investing in both stocks and real estate – something we also support, given our strong belief that having a diversified portfolio is the right strategy for the long-term.

In terms of real estate investments, perhaps the major disadvantage when compared to stocks is the greater amount of work involved in managing the investment. Among the important issues that arise with real estate are: finding and keeping tenants; maintaining the property; and changes in zoning, income tax and other laws that can affect the property value. An advantage of real estate is diversification, though property can be difficult to manage if it is located several hundred or even thousands of miles from one's home. While a property management company can be hired to supervise the lease, doing so impacts one's return on the property, and selecting the wrong property manager can lead to costly mistakes.

"In terms of real estate investments, perhaps the major disadvantage when compared to stocks is the greater amount of work involved in managing the investment"

For someone who wants to avoid such problems, one might consider purchasing and then renting out a commercial property using a triple net lease (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NNN_lease). Assuming that the tenant you select is a well-financed company and the lease is of long enough duration, commercial property can be an excellent investment for retired individuals. Another appropriate type of investment is raw land. While such land cannot be depreciated (thus limiting its tax benefits), purchasing the right parcel of land at the right time one can provide substantial returns. As a side benefit, if the land is in an area where you like to vacation, you may, within reason, be able to write off the travel costs to inspect the property. Again, appropriate record keeping is essential.

Renting out homes or apartment complexes can also be profitable, especially in California if one can purchase during a bottom in the housing market. The benefits and disadvantages of this type of investment matches those for commercial real estate, though with housing the turnover (renters) is likely to be quicker.

Generally we do not recommend investing in limited partnerships, unless one has substantial assets, a working knowledge of corporate law, and one actually wants to be involved in operating a business. Most investments in real estate we review, aside from limited partnerships, do not require substantial involvement in operating a business.

The last type of real estate investment would be a REIT (real estate investment trust), which operates a lot like a mutual fund or ETF (exchange-traded fund). In that sense, REITs are almost a hybrid between stocks and "normal" real estate investments. REITs use your money to invest in all types of real estate, and can thus provide almost automatic diversification across all types real estate investments by choosing the appropriate REIT. In addition, they must pay out 90% of their net earnings to shareholders as dividends, leading to an average dividend yield above 4%, significantly higher than the average dividend yield of the S&P 500, which is below 2%. For those looking for higher dividend yields, REITs may work well in an investment portfolio.

All investments include risk, and if a portfolio is well–diversified, the return is often proportional to the risk. As we are now experiencing, even holding cash includes inflation risk.

Beware of Bogus ERFA Website

By Mark Shapiro, CSU-ERFSA Webmaster

When we expanded the membership eligibility of our association to include all retirees from the California State University System who receive pension benefits from CalPERS, we changed the name of our organization from the California State University Emeritus and Retired Faculty Association to the California State University Emeritus and Retired Faculty & Staff Association.

At the same time, we moved our association's website from csuerfa.org to csuerfsa.org and we abandoned the csuerfa.org domain. We have since learned that some unscrupulous operators have taken over the csuerfa.org domain, and have posted a website they call "Protecting the Rights of Retired and Emeritus."

Some of the information on this bogus site has been stolen directly from our old CSU-ERFA website in violation of our copyright notices. In addition, the operators of the site have hidden themselves behind fake email addresses. They also have made their domain name registration private in a way that makes it impossible to contact the person(s) who now own the domain name, and they are using a virtual hosting site for their webpage that does not respond to requests for contact information. Please be aware that the csuerfa.org website is bogus. It is not in any way connected to the California State University Emeritus and Retired Staff Association. The information contained on the bogus website is - in many cases - misleading!

The only legitimate California State University Emeritus and Retired Faculty & Staff Association website is located at https://csuerfsa.org.

Retirement and Summer Cruising

(Continued from page 7)

We saw half of the metopes from the Parthenon in the British Museum, and the other half at the newer Acropolis museum in Athens.

Jarlshof Ruins, Shetland Islands

We also enjoyed about eight production shows (musicals) during our cruises, two great musicals in London (*Grease* and *Tina*), and then saw *Pretty Woman The Musical* at the Orange County Performing Arts Center in Costa Mesa shortly after we returned. We'd rank the London performances at the top, with the cruise performances next; though all of them were quite good.

Such comparisons are valuable, since many of us wonder about the overall value of cruising. The options are: staying home, independent travel, organized tours, and cruising. Each has it positives and drawbacks. Even one of our favorite travel guides, Rick Steves, has finally warmed up to cruising after 20+ years of touting independent travel. We suspect he changed his opinion because he is essentially our age. Cruising is extremely convenient and very cost effective. Our four night stay in London was amazing, yet adding up the total cost of three whole days in London versus three whole days of cruising comes down easily on the side of cruising. Next time we travel around Europe we might find a similar Mediterranean cruise that has three one–week segments. We'd start with several days in Barcelona, then cruise for seven days to Rome. After three weeks in Rome, we'd take the next go–around cruise and finish up with two weeks cruising to Athens and finish in Barcelona. Something like that would be almost the perfect way to merge the best of independent travel and cruising.

A last plug for cruising – you can visit many places that would not normally be on one's bucket list and be totally amazed. One night I was awakened by light coming through our cabin's curtains. I woke and went out on the balcony – and saw the 1915 Çanakkale Bridge connecting European and Asian Turkey in the Dardanelles Strait at Lapseki, Turkey, pictured below, all lit up. Amazing!

In Memoriam

Bakersfield – Louis R. Wildman

Chico – Larry A. Burleson
Beverly N. Chinas
Ralph C. Huntsinger
Beverly J. Jenkins
Robert G. Main

Fresno – Shirley A. Kovacs
James M. Smith

Humboldt – Sara M. Turner

Long Beach – Alain Marsot

Los Angeles – Walter M. Askin
Virginia Hoffman

Northridge – Ronald J. Siegel

Pomona – Joseph H. Stodder

Sacramento – Wiiliam A. Dorman

San Diego – Paochin Chu

San Francisco – Eva Esterman

San Jose – Judith Demko
Theodore C. Zsutty

San Luis Obispo – Michael M. Cirovic

Sonoma – Martin S. Blaze
Bryant P. Hichwa

Stanislaus – Viji K. Sundar

Thank You, Executive Director Goldwhite

The following are excerpts from a letter sent to our former Executive Director, Harold Goldwhite by President Barry Pasternack: "On behalf of CSU ERFSA, I want to express my sincere thanks and gratitude for the past six years of your service as the Executive Director of CSU ERFSA. Your wise counsel and generous spirit were much valued by your colleagues on the Executive Committee and helped us deal with the challenges brought on by the COVID pandemic. I know that I speak for all of our colleagues on the Executive Committee when I say "we could not have done it without you." You will be greatly missed, but I hope that we will see you at a future State Council meeting.

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
EMERITUS AND RETIRED FACULTY
AND STAFF ASSOCIATION
The Retirement Center
18111 Nordhoff Street
Northridge, CA 91330-8339

Address Service Requested

https://www.csuerfsa.org
Have you moved? If so, please report your new address to the CSU-ERFSA office at the above address.

California State University Emeritus & Retired Faculty and Staff Association

CSU-ERFSA Announces Its 2022 Small Grants Award Program

Applications are due in the CSU-ERFSA Office no later than October 31, 2022

CSU-ERFSA encourages CSU-ERFSA members involved in research and creative projects to apply for a grant. The small grant program is competitive, with past awards ranging from $100-$1,000.

Grant applications and guidelines can be downloaded from the CSU-ERFSA Grant Awards Program web page, by calling the CSU-ERFSA office at (818) 677-6522, or, by emailing your request to csuerfsa@csun.edu.

The CSU-ERFA Foundation Board anticipates at least $6,000 will be available for awards.

CSU-ERFSA Calendar of Events

August 26, 2022 - CalPERS will mail ballots for the election to replace Henry Jones as the holder of the retiree seat on the CalPERS Board of Administration. Ballots must be returned by September 26, 2022.

September 19-October 14, 2022 - CalPERS health plan open enrollment.

Late October 2022 - CSU-ERFSA State Council meets on Zoom. Spring 2023 State Council will be in-person or hybrid.

October 31, 2022 2 p.m. Pacific time - CSU-ERFSA Research Grant Applications due.

Nov. 4 - December 5, 2022 - CalPERS Board runoff election, if needed.

January 25, 2023 - 2-3:30 p.m. Winter CSU-ERFSA Executive Committee, on Zoom.

Medicaid LTC Payments

(Continued from page 5)

residents in nursing homes. In 2019, that totaled $50.8 billion. Medicare, which covers short-term nursing home visits for older adults or people with disabilities, spent $38.2 billion that year. (Officials have not included Medicare payments in their discussions.)

“The absolutely critical ingredient” for good care is sufficient staffing, Dan Tsai, a deputy administrator at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and Medicaid director, told KHN. CMS requested public comments on a possible direct care spending mandate in its proposed update of nursing home payment policies and rates for next year. Studies have found a close connection between staffing levels and care.