



# AMCRE

ASSOCIATION OF MENDOCINO COUNTY RETIRED  
EMPLOYEES

Post Office Box 903 • Ukiah, CA 95482

FRIENDSHIP • UNITY • STRENGTH • GROWTH

## AMCRE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

03/15/21

Hello Mendocino County Retired Employees,

Let me introduce myself, my name is Leatha Andersen and I have been appointed the Interim President of the AMCRE as of February 19, 2021. I started my employment with Mendocino County as a CETA part-time employee back in 1982, when my six months was up they offered me a full time position at Social Services clerical unit. After many years of changing positions within the department, I ended my retirement in 2014 as an Administrative Secretary for HHS Administration. I grew up in Fort Bragg, as the last of 6 children and came to warmer weather in Ukiah after High School. My parents never had funds for college, so I knew I needed a job with benefits. The rest is history. After being retired 5 years I am working as an Extra Help County Employee for Public Health as the Public Health Director's Secretary and enjoying my job there.

I am learning a lot about AMCRE with the help from the Directors about what my duties and expectations are. Just like you I joined AMCRE when I retired to be able to see some of the co-workers again!

It has been our misfortune that Sue Thornhill resigned on February 19<sup>th</sup>. AMCRE has been fortunate to have folks like Irene Lange, Tim Knudson, Jim Andersen, and Sue Thornhill who came from the Treasurer's Office and Retirement Offices to help provide vital information for our retirees when concerns arise. They provided liaison information regarding Legislation that affected us or what was happening for California retirees. Unfortunately, those skilled people are no longer on the Board and we need to evaluate what we really do as members here. Luckily we still have Jim Andersen as our CRCEA representative for legislative updates, and overall there is consensus to move forward with perhaps a few subtle changes. Our goals are to continue with our Board of Director Meetings and our General Membership Meetings, offer Scholarships, meet for a Summer BBQ, and Holiday Dinner. Covid-19 has put a damper on things but we are moving forward anticipating our County will be

open for gatherings again. We will always give you plenty of notice in our newsletter "The Connection" whether or not we are planning to gather for an event.

So right now, we need a few things to help things along. We have difficulty as a working group sharing each other's documents, therefore a long overdue upgrade for a AMCRE laptop is needed and will be voted on to approve at our next Board of Director's meeting on April 12. In addition, our website went down without notice. Sabernet no longer supports websites so we are in development with Respectech to create a new website for AMCRE. Unfortunately, we need to re-create each piece that goes into the website and we are working diligently to develop this as soon as we can for Scholarship season as it is approaching fast. When you have a chance please look us up for the latest information at [www.amcre.org](http://www.amcre.org)

As many of you are aware, the Mendocino County Retirement Office is working on the Historical Benefit Review Project. AMCRE and SEIU have been written letters in support of Mendocino County retirees to plead with the Retirement Board and its process, to alleviate the burden to the retirees. These are difficult times when an institution we put our faith and hard work into wants to recalculate our retirement income years later, and for some of us reduce it. Very upsetting for many of us!

AMCRE is remaining to mail out "The Connection" as a way to communicate with retirees but also working on methods to connect through the website too. We are at a point with the age of our demographic that we must do both written and email (website) notifications to share information.

Remember we are always looking for new members to fill our Board of Directors. If you are interested, in joining a group where you really don't have a lot to do, join AMCRE! We welcome all interested retirees. Just email us at [amcremendocino@gmail.com](mailto:amcremendocino@gmail.com) or call Cyndi Montesonti at 707-489-7752. Please take care!

Cheers,  
Leatha Andersen  
Interim President

## GOOD BYE and THANK YOU

How do you thank such a wonderful person and her partner for all the years of service and help they have given to AMCRE. Our dear President and Friend Sue Thornhill has decided to resign effective immediately. There is a lot going on in her life. Sue and Chuck have been to every Board Meeting and General Meeting. Chuck is our favorite cook and BBQer. We will miss your presence so much and hope you show up at a General Meeting now and then when we resume them. Words can never express our deepest gratitude to you and your family for the use of Slam Dunk Pizza for meetings and your over the top cooking skills. We hope you don't stay away too long. Love you both and Thank you.

### **MCERA CONTINUES PENSION RECALCULATIONS AS RETIREES FACE REDUCTIONS IN BENEFITS**

As the MCEA Historical Benefit Review Project (HBRP) moves forward, many County retirees are finding their monthly benefit amount reduced. While there have been increases in some of the benefit recalculations, the majority of changes going forward will result in reductions to retirees. This process will continue through the summer and perhaps beyond. A growing group of concerned retirees have formed to discuss and explore options moving forward. For some, it is important to review with others how objections to the benefit reductions might best be handled. We are encouraging all retirees to contact us with your specifics so information can be shared. There is no one outlined approach that has been identified. We hope we can be of assistance to you and would like to offer support in whatever course of action you chose, including none. Group contact information is listed below.

Error Correction Notices have been initiated for several error categories. Many more will be forthcoming. Please consult the MCERA website for a listing of benefit recalculations to date. There are graphs providing non identifying information on actions taken. There is significant information available in past MCERA agenda items. Become informed about your pension benefit and possible changes to it. Pay particular attention to resolutions, executive reports, and updates regarding the HBRP. Most applicable information is available from the November 2020 agendas forward. Becoming educated in the historical issues and the magnitude of the errors made over at least a forty year period, will help explain the errors applicable to you, if any. If you need assistance in this process we are here to help.

MCERA has extended the objection period upon receipt of an Error Correction Notice. The period has been extended from 30 to 60 days. It is important to follow the stated process for objections in order to have your case

be eligible for review. You should file an objection in the 60 day period to reserve your appeal rights under MCERA policy. You do not need to have your full case explored or understood to file an objection. The issues for recalculation may be complex. You may have more than one reason for a recalculation and all need to be fully vetted. If you wish to explore an objection to your recalculation you need to request your file from MCERA. You cannot fully understand the historical information your pension is based on without your file.

We would like to request that you refer family members and friends that are retirees to us. Please assist them as well as us in helping to identify all of those that are impacted by having a reduction in benefits through no fault of their own. We are all in this together. Please contact **Steve Prochter** for additional information and to add your name to a growing list of those harmed by a pension recalculation. Steve can be reached at [prochter@gmail.com](mailto:prochter@gmail.com) or **707.485.0715**.

-- Kendall Smith

### **COLA**

At its February 2021 meeting, the Board of Retirement approved a **1.5% COLA** as recommended by its actuarial consultants. The COLA will be effective April 1, 2021 and will therefore be reflected on your pension payment the last day of April. For those who retired before 1982, and have a balance in their COLA bank, your COLA may be augmented up to a maximum of 3%.

*Jim Andersen*

## WELCOME NEW AMCRE MEMBERS

AS OF JANUARY 2021

993 Members Strong!

<b>RETIREE NAME</b>	<b>RETIREMENT DATE</b>	<b>DEPT</b>	<b>YRS OF SERVICE</b>
Carolyn Peckham	12/27/20	HHSA	18
Tammy Chandler	12/27/20	HHSA	4.75
Justin Wyatt	12/27/20	Sheriff's Office	33
Dorothy Mazzanti	12/31/20	Executive Office	9.7
Carre Brown	1/10/21	Board of Supervisors	12
Bernardo Hurtado	1/10/21	Executive Office	12
John McCowen	1/10/21	Board of Supervisors	12
Edward Collins	1/24/21	Auditor's Office	31

### **December New Associates**

Mark Canale

Deborah Johnson

Lu-Ann Burton

### **February New Associate**

Gwyn Rones

### **IN MEMORIAM**

AMCRE EXTENDS OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO  
FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF RETIREES LISTED BELOW

<b>RETIREE NAME</b>	<b>DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>DATE</b>
Donald Spurlock		12/13/2020
Alma Buzzard		12/20/2020
Lily Martin	Public Health	1/18/2021
Ann-Ara Black	Hospital	1/28/2021
Robert De Lapo	Public Works	1/29/2021

**THE BEST THINGS  
IN LIFE ARE THE  
PEOPLE YOU LOVE,  
THE PLACES YOU'VE  
SEEN, AND THE  
MEMORIES YOU'VE  
MADE ALONG  
THE WAY.**

THEGOODVIBE.CO

### **NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTION**

*If anyone would like to share a travel adventure or any other newsworthy information, please email your article and pictures to Dorinda Miller or Cyndi Montesonti. Our emails are in this newsletter. We are always looking for contributors*

### **SUNSHINE COMMITTEE**

Consists of

Shirley Christensen~Sheriff's Office.

*If you know of any of our members who could use a get-well or sympathy card, please contact Shirley, 707-485-7083, with any details along with correct names and addresses, if you have it.*

**AMCRE EMAIL ADDRESS:**

[amcremendocino@gmail.com](mailto:amcremendocino@gmail.com)



# AMCRE

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## *Board of Directors*

### **PRESIDENT**

Sue Thornhill

### **VICE-PRESIDENT**

*Vacant*

### **SECRETARY**

Cyndi Montesonti

### **TREASURER**

Raylene Lucchesi

### **C.R.C.E.A. DELEGATE**

James Andersen

### **DIRECTORS**

#### **3-year**

Tom Desroches

Dorinda Kay Miller

#### **2-year**

Marilyn Heath

Leatha Andersen

#### **1-year**

Shirley Christensen

Tommy Ingram

### **NON-ELECTED POSITIONS**

#### **SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE**

Cyndi Montesonti

Marilyn Heath

Tom Ingram

#### **MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

Dorinda Kay Miller

#### **THE CONNECTION:**

##### **Co-Editors ~**

Cyndi Montesonti

Dorinda Kay Miller

#### **SUNSHINE COMMITTEE**

Shirley Christensen

#### **WEB MASTERS**

Leatha Andersen

Jill Martin

## **MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING**

January 25, 2021 12:05 p.m.

Slam Dunk Pizza Ukiah, CA

### **1. CALL TO ORDER:**

President Sue Thornhill called the meeting to order at noon.

### **2. ROLL CALL: PRESENT:**

Sue Thornhill, Cyndi Montesonti, Tom Liberatore, Tommy Deroches, Tommy Ingram, Raylene Lucchesi, Leatha Andersen, and Shirley Christensen, Dorinda Miller and Jim Andersen. ABSENT: Marilyn Heath. GUESTS: Doris Rentschler: Executive Director of Mendocino County Employees Retirement Association and Kendall Smith.

### **3. REPORTS:**

Minutes: There were no minutes to approve. Last draft minutes appeared in the October – December 2020 newsletter to approve the Slate of Officers.

### **4. President Sue Thornhill**

reported that we are going to go out of order on the agenda since we have a few guests visiting. Our first guest, invited by Jim

overpayment/underpayment issue and answered questions from the Board Members of AMCRE. She said her door is opened and if you would like to meet with her, to call her office and set up an appointment or email her. She said her office has to go through 500 files affected by either the underpayment or overpayment issue. Underpayment retirees will get a bump in their retirement and corrected back for 3 years. Overpaid employees do not have to repay anything, but their Retirement Pensions will be adjusted accordingly. She said her office has until August 2021 to finish recalculations. She said that once people receive the letter with their new calculations, they will have a right to appeal. She said it will be a two-step process. First they will provide any additional details and put in writing directed to her why it isn't correct. Ms. Rentschler will respond. If retirees do not like her response or agree with her and she upheld her decision, they could then file an appeal with the Board of Retirement. She answered a few more questions and again said to feel free to contact her with additional questions or comments.

**5. TREASURER REPORT:** Raylene Lucchesi reported for November 2020 that there is \$9,266.23 with \$723 allocated for Scholarships, \$8399.08 for December with \$293 remaining in Scholarships Fund. Cyndi Montesonti moved we accept the Treasurer's Report. Tom Liberatore seconded. PASSED. MEMBERSHIP: Dorinda Miller reported that there are 988 members as of January 2021.

**6. SCHOLARSHIPS:** Cyndi Montesonti reported that for the 2020-2021 school year, five \$1000 scholarships have been awarded (\$500 per semester) with grades and proof of enrollment full-time in a college, university or trade school. All five submitted

Andersen, is Doris Rentschler, Executive Director of MCERA. Ms. Rentscher explained the

**Meeting:** Below are the listed months that the Board of Directors and the General Membership will meet. There are four meetings a year for each, and are usually held the second Monday of the month.

**Board Meetings:** January, April, July, October (special meeting for Board of Directors nominations), and November. Board meetings are usually held at 12:00 p.m. At Slam Dunk Pizza.

**General Meetings:** February, May, August, and December.

their transcripts and proof of enrollment for the Spring semester and four have been paid their final payment. Cyndi Montesonti reported that the next newsletter will have all the information regarding applying for Scholarships for the 2021-2022 year.

**7. CRCEA:** James Andersen reported that their last meeting was on Zoom in November 2020. He said that no Associations are having in person meetings like this. Jim said we could probably set up a Zoom meeting and the Retirement Board has the capabilities and could probably answer questions. Some of our older Board Members do not have computers to Zoom in with. [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us)

#### **8. NEW BUSINESS:**

--**RESIGNATION OF TOM LIBERATORE:** Vice-President Tom Liberatore submitted his resignation after 15 years on the AMCRE Board of Directors. He was presented with a certificate, card and candy. Raylene Lucchesi moved we accept Tom's resignation letter. Tommy Deroches seconded. **PASSED Reluctantly.**

--**GENERAL MEETINGS:** ALL GENERAL MEETINGS HAVE BEEN CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

--**PACIFIC INTERNET ISSUE:** Dorinda Miller discussed our website has been down for a while. She said that Jill Martin and Cynthis Snider will work on a new website and keep it up and running. Leatha will help them as well. Jill Martin will be the new webmaster. Dorinda talked about our domain and having to have the name changed because when Pacific Internet dropped us, someone grabbed it up. We could purchase it back. Dorinda said that there are fees associated with the website and domain name. She said we could have amcre.net or amcre.info. Cyndi Montesonti chimed in and wanted told everyone that Granville Bennett Poole has resigned as our long term Webmaster. He is aware of what happened with Pacific Internet. Cyndi said he will watch our emails until we get the website up and running and Jill Martin can take it over from Granville. The Board thanked Granville for the wonderful website and all he did over the years. Leatha will help with the website and maybe connect with Granville to find out what were on each of the tabs. Cyndi Montesonti then went on to report that she finally reached Pacific Internet about a refund for dropping our website and we paid the year. They will prorate us and send a check to our P.O. Box soon.

--**CRCEA INVOICE – RAYLENE LUCCHESI** reported she received the yearly CRCEA invoice. It was \$693.40 for our membership dues. Sue said it did not need a vote.

--**OVERPAYMENT/UNDERPAYMENT ISSUE:** President Sue Thornhill said an Ad Hoc Committee might be formed to work on this issue. Ron Ball from Carlsbad, CA (former Chief Deputy County Counsel) is interested in serving on this Committee. Cyndi Montesonti entertained a motion to pay Ron Ball for travel expenses should he need to come to Ukiah for a meeting regarding this issue. It died for lack of second. Kendall Smith felt like they would be Zoom meetings. Kendall Smith went on to address AMCRE Board Members about her strong feels on this issue and how it is important we stick together and follow the law, but fight to save our benefits. She expressed her frustration with the entire matter and feels more could be done. She thinks we should consider asking for a 90 day challenge period. She will be putting a formal letter into the Board of Retirement. Kendall said that Steve Prochter will form a concerned members mailing list. Information will be in the newsletter. President Sue Thornhill also submitted a letter to the Board of Retirement on behalf of the retirees on this issue. A copy will be in the upcoming newsletter. SEIU sent a letter as well.

Jim Andersen discussed with the Board that although he is the Alternate Retirement Board Member and a member of the AMCRE Board of Directors, he doesn't have a legal conflict of interest but there could be an ethical issue. He has not participated in closed session items with the Board of Retirement on this issue as of yet.

President Sue Thornhill also discussed the issue and how important documents that could have been related to this subject matter was probably purged by the Board of Retirement.

#### **9. OLD BUSINESS:**

**THE CONNECTION:** Cyndi finished draft of the next January/February/March Newsletter. Cyndi submitted to Dorinda after the DRAFT minutes are finished and she receives the President's Message. Dorinda will finalize and submit to Creative Workshop in the next few days. Kendall Smith submitted an article as well.

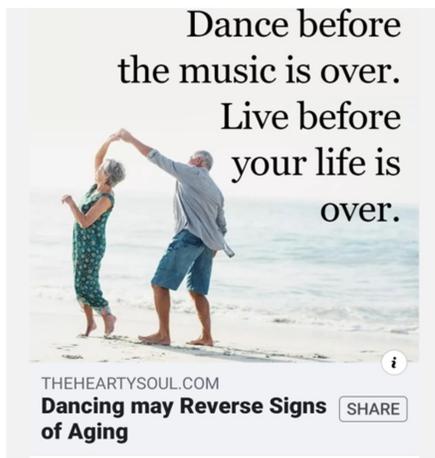
**10. ADJOURNED** at 1:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
CYNDI MONTESONTI, Secretary

**Greetings Fellow AMCRE Members,  
TO CONTACT A BOARD MEMBER**

LEATHA ANDERSEN, Interim President  
Email: [leatha261@comcast.net](mailto:leatha261@comcast.net)  
707-489-2686 or  
CYNDI MONTESONTI, Secretary  
Co-Editor/AMCRE & Scholarship Committee  
Email: [tomcyndichili@comcast.net](mailto:tomcyndichili@comcast.net)  
707-489-7752 or  
RAYLENE LUCCHESI, Treasurer  
Email: [raylenelucchesi@att.net](mailto:raylenelucchesi@att.net)  
707-468-0751 or  
DORINDA KAY MILLER, Board Member;  
Co-Editor/AMCRE & Membership  
Committee  
Email: [dmiller0404@gmail.com](mailto:dmiller0404@gmail.com)  
707-489-8564 or  
Write to:  
AMCRE P.O. Box 903 Ukiah, CA 95482  
Email to:  
[amcremendocino@gmail.com](mailto:amcremendocino@gmail.com)

- ✓ **SENIOR DISCOUNTS:...** BEST RULE OF THUMB...ask ask ask!
- ✓ **MOVING, or any notification changes?** Notify the Membership Committee -- Dorinda Miller ([dmiller0404@gmail.com](mailto:dmiller0404@gmail.com)), 491 Chablis Dr, Ukiah, CA 95482, so AMCRE's records stay correct. Be sure you ALSO connect with the Mendocino County Retirement Association 625-B Kings Court, Ukiah, with any address change, telephone and email change (if applicable) as well.
- ✓ If you have any questions, please call any Board member.



**SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION**

If you are a member of AMCRE, and have children or grandchildren going to college or trade school, they will be able to submit an application for one of the four \$1000 scholarships we are giving out for the 2021/2022 school year. They can receive \$500 each semester with proof of full-time enrollment into a college, or trade school and applying per the directions in the application. A student who is returning to college or trade school for additional years and for graduating seniors who are going to enter college or trade school may also apply. Applications will be due by May 31, 2021. Go on line and print out the application and follow all instructions.



The website is AMCRE.ORG click **SCHOLARSHIP TAB**.

For further information, please contact Cyndi Montesonti, Scholarship Co-Chair @ (707) 489-7752 email: [tomcyndichili@comcast.net](mailto:tomcyndichili@comcast.net)



## MCERA/CRCEA

At the March 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Retirement, staff reported out that 189 of the 538 proposed corrections under the Historical Benefits Review Project (HBRP) had been completed. MCERA staff had notified all retirees who were impacted by the HBRP to let them know there would be webinars on March 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> to provide an overview of the project, and to answer general questions from those attending. In addition, MCERA has created a page on its website containing frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the project. Specific questions about any retiree's correction calculation should still be directed to MCERA staff, as each calculation is unique. MCERA anticipates that the originally planned completion of the project may be extended due to the recent loss of an extra-help employee who was brought in specifically to free up permanent staff to work through the corrections. The Board of Retirement has been receiving and considering both written and verbal comments from retirees. We anticipate a closed session will be held on the HBRP at the Board's April meeting.

The CRCEA Board continues to meet via Zoom and is currently addressing the organization's bylaws. The primary issues are the election and removal of officers, as well as indemnification. The Fall 2021 conference in Los Angeles is scheduled to be an "in person" conference. However, the Spring 2022 conference in Orange is anticipated to be virtual. Both conferences may change, however, depending upon the status of COVID 19 infections as the gatherings approach. There were no significant legislative items.

*Jim Andersen*

## FUTURE GENERAL MEETING INFORMATION

The Board of Directors at the 4/12/2021 meeting voted to cancel the Summer BBQ.

However, the good news is that the Broiler Steakhouse said they plan to start banquets in June 2021 per the Governor who wants to open up the State. Therefore, mark your calendars for Monday, December 13, 5:00 p.m. to join everyone for AMCRE's first event since the Pandemic at the holiday dinner. We know the cost is \$40.00 per person. The Board will vote on Monday, November 8, 2021, if we are able to contribute anything towards the dinner this year. We have had a lot of expenses with creating our new website. Watch the newsletter for future information.



We had a great time on our trip to San Francisco. First we had clam chowder at Boudin Bakery, then we went on the Red and White Cruises for an hour around the bay. Dinner at the Todich Grill was nice and we had cioppino, a fish soup. We spent the night in Santa Rosa and headed home to Ukiah the next day.

**Tom & Gaylene Desroches**

**OUR WEBSITE IS UP AND RUNNING:**

**AMCRE.ORG**

ASSOCIATION OF MENDOCINO COUNTY RETIRED EMPLOYEES

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Ukiah, CA 95482

PRESORT STD

U.S. Postage

PAID

Ukiah, CA

Express-It

MOVING, or any  
notification  
changes?

**NOTIFY AMCRE**

Amcremendocino@gmail.com



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## THE CONNECTION

***General Membership Meeting Cancelled  
For May 2021.***

***Hopefully we will see all of you sometime in 2021.***

***STAY WELL!***

April – May – June 2021

Co-Editors: Cyndi Montesonti & Dorinda Kay Miller