



# THE NETWORK

Newsletter of The Retired Employees of San Diego County

May 2020

Honoring Yesterday—Protecting Tomorrow

Vol. 51, No. 5

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Stan Coombs



We usually begin these President's Messages with a list of notable events that occurred after the previous edition of *THE NETWORK* was locked up, usually only a few items.

This month it's a whole different animal. The world exploded just after the deadline for submittal of the April *NETWORK* to the editor. It seems so long ago (!) We added

a short Postscript at the end of the President's Message in that edition, at least acknowledging the sudden arrival of the coronavirus pandemic.

We mentioned the 156,000 cases worldwide, the declared national and state health emergencies and the New York Stock Exchange falling 5,500 points. The Exchange had plummeted when investors realized normal business had to be closed down to control the unfettered spread of deadly COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus. That was on March 13<sup>th</sup>.

By now you will have read that April *NETWORK* and more, having had the benefit, if that's the right term, of continuing, frightening news reports. By today, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 27 days later, COVID-19 cases worldwide have multiplied more than ten times, to almost 1.6 million, and 95,000 deaths. U.S. cases total 457,000 with 16,000 deaths. U.S. mortality estimates range as high as 240,000. Businesses  
**(Continued on Page 5)**



## WE SALUTE OUR HEROES

On behalf of the nearly 7,000 members of the Retired Employees of San Diego County, a simple but large "THANKS" is offered in gratitude to the thousands of doctors, nurses and medical specialists and support staff who are risking their lives under simply terrible circumstances to provide care to folks with coronavirus infections.

We are the elderly who are particularly vulnerable and often alone at this stage of our lives. Knowing that dedicated medical professionals will be there for us if we are diagnosed is amazing, heartening and humbling. They are our heroes. □

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## UPCOMING RESDC EVENT CANCELLATIONS

In order to comply with the current statewide "Stay at Home," order and prioritizing what is in the best interest of the health and well-being of our members, the following upcoming events have been cancelled:

**May General Membership Meeting**  
Tuesday, May 12, 2020

**Flag Day/Independence Day Luncheon**  
Tuesday, June 16, 2020

**RESDC Day at the Padres**  
Wednesday, June 24, 2020

RESDC leadership is committed to identifying future opportunities for hosting the great events our members have become accustomed to. As always, thank you for your membership and stay safe! □



## PENSION FACTS

### Public Pensions Face Big Losses but are Poised to Help and Gradually Recover

By Chris Heiserman, Director



I'm sure that headline sounds a bit too positive (aka "the glass is half full") considering the dire economic, social and personal circumstances we find ourselves in this spring. Let me explain. First of all from a purely local and somewhat selfish standpoint, as San Diego County retirees and residents, we are favorably

blessed with stable retirement benefits and a county government applying its considerable budget reserves and expertise to deal comprehensively and compassionately with this serious life-and-death medical emergency.

Secondly, even though we may be in better shape than many, there is no question that Americans throughout the nation have to bravely face the same terrible, silent and deadly foe. Truer words were never spoken (or perhaps chanted solemnly): "We are all in this together!" Striking countries all over the world and sectors of the United States at different times, the coronavirus pandemic is the very definition of a global and national catastrophe.

Since we are retired members of the San Diego County Employees' Retirement Association (SDCERA), we avoid the frustration and stress of the millions applying for unemployment during the pandemic, or trying to figure out how to access the huge federal bailout programs. Our \$13.5 billion pension fund took a hit with the plunging stock market (down to about \$12 billion), but county retirement officials have said using just 10% of these assets and with regular contributions by the plan sponsors and employees, SDCERA can pay retired members and beneficiaries for well over a decade. SDCERA Chief Executive Officer, David Wescoe, says paying pensions will be their Number 1 priority, which he affirmed by processing and transmitting March pension payments two weeks early, before staff vacated their offices under Governor Gavin Newsom's statewide closure order.

So good for us, but what about the impact of the debilitating economic chaos and the murky, unknown future of all public pension funds and retirement prospects in general for Americans? Based on a sample of 56 large American pension plans, Moody's Investment Services estimates that U.S. public retirement plans will endure investment losses of about 21% for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020. Moody's accurately states the obvious in that the major losses will worsen pension liability challenges that many state and local governments already faced.

In a March 26, 2020 *Bloomberg Businessweek* article, reporter Ben Steverson indicated the shock of the coronavirus crisis was demolishing the hopes of American workers envisioning some semblance of a secure retirement. The majority of the nation's public pension plans were far less than fully funded before the pandemic invasion undermined the global economy and financial markets plummeted. The situation is bleak, but when the crisis is behind us and economic conditions improve, public retirement plans should be able to gradually rebuild their equity over the long term. Unfortunately, as we've pointed out frequently in *NETWORK* articles, state and local government sponsors of these pension systems will face difficult decisions finding a balance between the rising costs of retirement benefits and the necessity of paying active workers to deliver the public services citizens expect and deserve.

Steverson also points out that the current crisis is piling more financial misery on two serious problems that were already staring Americans in the face. Nearly half of U.S. households headed by someone 55 or older have nothing saved for retirement. Many more have been caught up in the decade's long shift in the private sector from traditional defined benefit pensions to individual 401(k) savings accounts, leaving them at the mercy of things like pandemic-fueled market free-falls.

Bad news pretty much all around. And that includes the notion that the fallback, Plan B, retirement position for a large segment of American society is just Social Security. Alicia Munnell, Director of the Boston College Center for Retirement Research, calls Social Security the "economic lifeline" created 90 years ago during another fiscal crisis – the Great Depression. According to Munnell, "Those checks are going to go out every month and continue no matter what happens in the stock market. That really is the backbone of the retirement system."

Perhaps a slim silver lining in this economic disaster is that for Social Security, a perennial political football in Congress, the conversation has moved away from cut-backs and austerity to making the very legitimate case now for more generous benefits.

Oh, yes, I still remember the "glass is half full" analogy and how we are going to help. Well, we also receive retirement checks every month and have reliable income that we spend in our communities and continue to provide revenue to governments at all levels. We may be considered among the "most vulnerable" at risk in this health crisis, but we are doing our part by following the rules (staying at home) and using our spending power to help prop up the flailing economy. □



**Memorial Day  
Monday, May 25**

# SDCERA

## A MESSAGE FROM SDCERA CEO DAVID WESCOE

I wanted to provide you with an update on SDCERA's activities during these difficult times.

As you know, SDCERA paid March retirement and beneficiary benefit payments one week ahead of schedule to alleviate any concerns about SDCERA's ability to operate or pay benefits during the pandemic. SDCERA is the only public pension plan I know of that did so. Recipients were very grateful. One Member emailed staff to say, "It was very kind and extraordinarily considerate for SDCERA to provide retirees their check early. SDCERA is a sterling example of what a financial institution that cares about its members should do."

As we say on the SDCERA website ([www.sdcer.org](http://www.sdcer.org)), there should be no concern whatsoever of SDCERA's ability to pay retired Members and beneficiaries their monthly retirement benefits. SDCERA can pay retired members and beneficiaries for well over a decade using just 10% of Trust Fund assets with regular contributions by the plan sponsors and employees. The remaining 90% of Trust Fund assets continue to be prudently invested in well-diversified financial markets and positioned to take advantage of market dislocations.

SDCERA staff is effectively and efficiently working remotely. Staff now is processing the nearly 300 retirement applications we received in March, and we are confident that all will be paid their benefit in April.

The Call Center is answering member calls from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday – Thursday.

Investments are performing as expected. Trust Fund assets are almost \$12 billion, and our performance is beating our benchmark: for the nine months ended March 31 performance is estimated to be down -7.9%, almost 2% ahead of our benchmark, which is down -9.6%. To put this in perspective, since the beginning of 2020, the Dow Jones Industrial Average is down 23% and the S&P is down 20%. Final March performance results will be available at the end of next week.

But, it is important to remember that our actuary calculates funding levels based on the Trust Fund's market value as of June 30, the end of our fiscal year. So, while we are managing current market volatility, the only performance number that matters is the Trust Fund's investment return as of June 30.

Please visit [www.sdcer.org](http://www.sdcer.org) for updates on our operations and email any questions to us at [msc@sdcer.org](mailto:msc@sdcer.org).

As I predicted to the Board of Retirement three weeks ago, this has been SDCERA's finest time. We have made history here, and I am very proud of SDCERA's staff performance dealing with unprecedented challenges. □

**David B. Wescoe**  
Chief Executive Officer  
San Diego County Employees Retirement Association  
2275 Rio Bonito Way, Suite 100  
San Diego, CA 92108-1685

**LATE UPDATE: David Wescoe unexpectedly resigned from his post as Chief Executive Officer of the San Diego County Employees Retirement Association during the April 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the County Board of Retirement. Stay tuned for more in future RESDC NETWORKS.**



## MORE THAN 300 ADDED TO EMAIL LIST IN A FEW DAYS

RESDC members quickly responded to the urgent request in President Stan Coombs' letter of April 1st to the membership for their email addresses. In the event printing services for *THE NETWORK* become unavailable due to an extended coronavirus shutdown, RESDC can still deliver the newsletter and other communications to members via email.

Executive Director Mark Nanzer said nearly 300 replies were received within 10 days. "We're still receiving them" he said. "This is a smart move and a big step in the right direction by those members. It ensures they can remain informed about important retirement issues." □

# DO I NEED TO GET TESTED FOR COVID-19?



Are you experiencing:  
Fever, Coughing or Shortness of Breath?

Call your physician

Doctor advises you to come in

Specimen is collected via swab and sent to lab to be tested

Doctor will provide you with test results

Doctor identifies mild symptoms and advises home isolation

Isolate / Stay at home

You didn't get an immediate response, and you're experiencing **severe symptoms?**

Go to your local urgent care/ ER or call **9-1-1**



**MORE INFORMATION** - Follow the California Department of Public Health: @capublichealth and [www.cdph.ca.gov/covid19](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/covid19)



**OFFICES  
CLOSED**

## MEMORIAL DAY MONDAY, MAY 25

The RESDC and SDCERA offices are both temporarily closed due to coronavirus guidelines. We are working from home and replying to emails and voice mails. Check for updates on these websites ([www.resdc.net](http://www.resdc.net) and [www.sdcera.org](http://www.sdcera.org)) Both offices will be closed in observance of Memorial Day. Emails and voice mails will be answered on the following day. □

## President's Message (Continued from Page 1)

have been closed across nearly all industries, and workers and residents told to stay home in all but several apparently optimistic states.

A devilish detail the coronavirus held close, is that the infected have no symptoms for weeks, meaning that the actual number is larger than what's known, and potentially, thousands of infected but asymptomatic folks are circulating through society.

The 95,000 COVID-19 dead worldwide notwithstanding, the pandemic has put the U.S. economy on its back. Most businesses are closed except for essential services, with seventeen million newly unemployed. The Stock Exchange was down over 10,000 points at one point, the Dow Jones losing 34% in March alone. Congress hurriedly approved three relief bills totaling over \$2.1 trillion, and will probably pass another large bill. For those unfamiliar with the term, one trillion dollars is 1,000,000 X \$1,000,000!

Not to be self-absorbed in the face of such suffering, what does this mean for San Diego County retirees? It's a fair question. We are older and more vulnerable to serious disease. We are financially dependent on a retirement system funded from employee payroll deductions, from the County of San Diego. . . whose revenues will be impacted by the economic carnage. . . and heavily on earnings from retirement fund investments that seem to have tanked. Last heard, the retirement fund had shrunk from a \$13.5 billion high to about \$12 billion. Is there enough left to pay all pensions? . . . for how long? There's some comforting news on that front to be found in Chris Heiserman's column, "Pension Facts." Read through. . .

Can we protect ourselves from the coronavirus? Perhaps best by supporting the strategies of some aggressive governors. We know the guidelines; stay home, separate, use facemasks, obsessive hand washing, etc. But the big-picture-analysts turn to the experiences of countries that went through earlier phases, China, South Korea, Singapore, Italy and now the UK. In the words of one commentator, "We know how this ends." He was referring to the pattern and timing of the rise, and then fall, in the number of daily reported new infections, as those countries cycled through their earlier pandemics, seen as predictors of current events in the U.S.

And those tells us, that as this is written, that we're still in the fast lane with only an inkling that the rocketing rise of new infections and deaths may be flattening just a bit, and the Stay at Home/social distancing strategy, designed to separate folks and slow infections, may be working. Research firms are working on treatments and vaccines, but today separation is the tool available and we have to individually use it despite the inconvenience and emotional stress that entails. Epidemiologists are hoping for improvement by late April at the earliest. By the time RESDC members read this in May, we just might have a slightly brighter picture.

In the meantime, respect the vulnerability that living with advanced age brings us, by avoiding exposure. Stay at home, distance yourself from others, including those you love outside your immediate household – it's tough not to be able to hug kids and grandkids - and do lots of cleaning and sanitizing. Follow the guidelines.

In addition to Chris Heiserman's article about the economic impacts of the coronavirus epidemic and retirement system responses, we also announce the cancelations of previously scheduled RESDC social events, to ensure the safety of members and staff. We will reschedule those again when it's safe to do so.

Stay Home! Stay Safe! This will pass. □

## RECENT EVENTS

### ❖ CalPERS Long-Term Care Fund Class Action – Litigation Update

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted all of our daily lives, and the civil courts are no exception. Currently, the Superior Court for the County of Los Angeles is closed for all non-emergency matters. This would include the CalPERS LTC Class Action case.

Several hearing dates have already been continued by the Court. The Court has continued the hearing on the Statement of Decision to a date to be determined, but no sooner than April 17, 2020. The previously scheduled hearing date for the Motion to Amend the Complaint has been continued from April 10, 2020 to May 14, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. The Court's Further Status Conference scheduled for April 14, 2020 has also been continued to May 14, 2020 at 1:30 p.m.

For more information, visit:

<http://calpersclassactionlawsuit.com/>

### ❖ Active and retired public employees across the country are stepping up in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

"I am a retired public employee. My husband and I have a little makeshift assembly line going on in our home with the two of us making face masks for nearby clinic and emergency room personnel. We have made 63 so far and have fabric to make a total of 270. Medical personnel are using these to cover/protect the hospital-issued N95 masks which are still in short supply. One nurse practitioner sent us a photo of her wearing our mask." – Sandy □

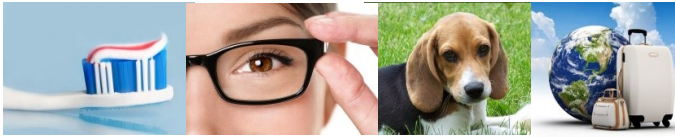
## PENSION FACTS AT A GLANCE

(619) 515-6800

The SDCERA Call Center  
hours of operation:

Monday—Thursday:  
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Friday: Closed

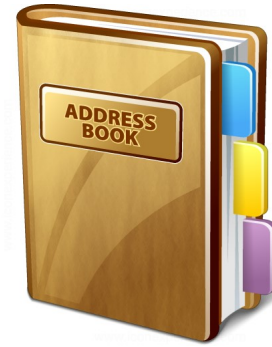


## UNDERSTANDING THE BENEFIT PLANS AVAILABLE TO RESDC MEMBERS

*By Greg Margulies, Pacific Group Agencies*

As the RESDC Benefit Plans Administrator, we constantly receive calls from members with questions about the benefit plans offered exclusively to members. Questions usually revolve around what plans are available and which plan is best for them. Below is a brief breakdown of the plans available. If you would like more information, please contact us at (800) 511-9065. **Note:** Dental enrollment is limited to the Open Enrollment period or with a Qualifying Event, but all other plans are available for enrollment year-round.

- **Dental** – RESDC offers an Ameritas PPO and a Cigna \$0 Co-pay HMO plan. Both plans are comprehensive, covering the routine preventative up to the major services like crowns and dentures. The Ameritas PPO plan allows you the freedom to use any dentist, but if you use an Ameritas network dentist, you will receive their discounted rates that can save you 40% or more. The Cigna HMO plan requires you use a dentist in the Cigna dental network.
- **Vision** – Two plans are available; a comprehensive VSP plan that includes coverage for an examination and an Ameritas plan that covers materials only (lenses and frames) that is designed for those members who have Kaiser or Health Net medical coverage, which includes a vision examination.
- **Travel** – Multiple plans are available to meet your needs. Whether you're looking to insure your non-refundable trip costs, cover any unexpected medical expenses while traveling internationally, or looking for help getting you back home after a medical emergency, we have a plan to cover your needs.
- **Pet** – Members have access to both United Pet Care (UPC) and Nationwide Pet Insurance. The UPC plan works like an HMO where you receive deep discounts when using one of their network vets. Nationwide has plans that can be tailored to meet your specific wants, from covering everything to only covering the catastrophic.
- **Term Life** – The most popular type of life insurance policies, available to healthy members who are seeking a benefit of \$100,000 or more. Policies require a free medical exam.
- **Legal Services** – Provides access to a nationwide network of attorneys. Members receive a free Will, contract/document review, legal letters written on your behalf, IRS audit protection, motor vehicle services, and much more, all for one low monthly cost.
- **ID Shield** – In addition to credit monitoring, this program monitors the internet "Dark Web", social media, court records, and much more to help make sure no one is using your personal identity.
- **Home & Auto** – Numerous companies are quoted to provide you the best policy to meet your needs.
- **Amplifon Hearing Health Care** – Members have access to this FREE hearing aid discount program, which provides average savings of 62% off manufacturers' suggested retail prices and provides numerous ancillary benefits. □



### HAVE YOU MOVED? DO WE HAVE YOUR CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

If you have moved recently or are planning to move, be sure to provide RESDC with your new address and any changes to your email address and phone numbers. We want to be sure you continue receiving your monthly *NETWORKS* and all important email announcements from us. We use email to keep our members informed of upcoming events, newsworthy announcements, and details about the benefits we offer. We also share photos from recent gatherings, meetings, and lunches.

Please call the RESDC office at (619) 688-9229 or email us at [resdc@resdc.net](mailto:resdc@resdc.net) if you have any changes to your address. Please also contact us if you have changed your telephone number, email address, or your name. □

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**Happy Mother's  
Day!  
May 10th**





**BOARD MEMBER PROFILE  
CARLOS GONZALEZ**

A member of the RESDC Board of Directors since December 2007, Carlos retired from the San Diego County Superior Court with 18.5 years of County service. He also served his country in the United States Marine Corps, retiring as a Gunnery Sergeant; and acquired accounting and auditing skills working in the savings and loan industry.

Carlos served three terms on the San Diego County Retirement Association (SDCERA) Board (1992-2003). His volunteer and enjoyable activities in retirement include coin and stamp collecting, golf, walking, nature and wine. Besides his service on the RESDC Board, Carlos sits on the Executive Committee as Treasurer of the California Retired County Employees Association (CRCEA).

Carlos returns frequently to his native Puerto Rico, and enjoyed a three-week, six-country tour of Europe in 2009. He has been married 44 years and has one child and two grandchildren. □

**ASSOCIATION OFFICERS**  
 President.....Stan Coombs  
 1st Vice Pres.....Chris Heiserman  
 2nd Vice Pres.....Janel Pehau  
 Secretary.....Carlos Gonzalez  
 Treasurer.....Frank Bittner

**ASSOCIATION DIRECTORS**  
 Leila Attar, Chuck Brown,  
 Charles Morgan, Merrill Roach,  
 George Shoemaker, Bruce Silva,  
 Bob Summers

**IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT**  
 John J. McTighe

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
 Mark Nanzer

**OFFICE STAFF** ....Marge Elmendorf  
 ....Karen Hazel  
 ....Andrew Steele

**NETWORK EDITOR**....Karen Hazel

**RESDC Office Email Address:**  
[resdc@resdc.net](mailto:resdc@resdc.net)

**QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

*Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared.*

▪ Budda



**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

- |                   |                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Jerry M. Hartman  | Sheriff                 |
| Kathleen H. Hider | Public Works            |
| Samuel R. Macam   | Health & Human Services |

The surviving Spouse of a member is eligible for RESDC membership. For enrollment assistance, please call: (866) 688-9229. □





**Office Hours:** 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday.

**Telephone:** (866) 688-9229 Toll Free

**Fax:** (619) 688-0766

**Email:** [resdc@resdc.net](mailto:resdc@resdc.net)

**Website:** [www.resdc.net](http://www.resdc.net)

 @RetiredEmployeesofSanDiegoCounty  
 @RESDC

**THE NETWORK** is the official monthly newsletter of the Retired Employees of San Diego County, Inc. (RESDC), a private non-profit organization.

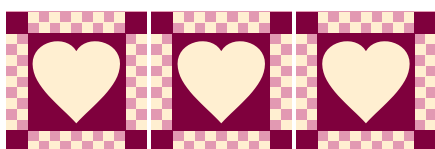
**Business and Inquiries:** Business matters and address changes may be recorded on the office voice mail at any time, call (866) 688-9229. Please spell your last name so the correct member record can be located.

The information printed in THE NETWORK is believed to be from reliable sources. However, no responsibility is assumed by The NETWORK for inaccuracies contained herein.

**Retired Employees of San Diego County, Inc.**  
8825 Aero Drive, Suite 205  
San Diego, CA 92123

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## BITS AND PIECES

**Steve Albert** retired from Health Services in 1999 after 26 years with the county. He recently traveled with his grandson on a cross country trip to visit the Grand Canyon, Yosemite, and Sequoia National Park. Steve's grandson, Bryan, did most of the driving and it was one of the highlights of his entire life. Steve lives in Gardnerville, Nevada. He enjoys gardening and making stained glass windows.

**Rachel Reed**, retired from Probation in 1979. Rachel turned 101 years old in January. In 2019, she was honored with an open house block party attended by friends, family, and neighbors. Highlights included a catered buffet, a commendation by the mayor of Del Mar, and a brass band with dancing in the street.

**David Gorman**, and his wife, Carol, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in February! They flew to Hawaii and spent time on four of the Hawaiian Islands. David worked in Health and Human Services for 11 years and retired in 2002. After retiring from the county, he taught English as a Second Language at an adult education annex in Provo, Utah. David and Carol live in Orem, Utah.

**Editor's note:** If you have taken an interesting trip or have had an intriguing event happen recently, please let us know so that we can share your story with our members.

If you have reached an exciting birthday, or wedding anniversary, please call Karen Hazel, RESDC Editor, at (866) 688-9229. You can also write to Karen at RESDC, 8825 Aero Drive, Suite 205, San Diego, CA 92123. You can also send your information to us by email at: [resdc@resdc.net](mailto:resdc@resdc.net) . □



## RESDC ONLINE SERVICES

Did you know that RESDC has an online **Member Directory**, which is accessible only to logged-in RESDC members? This is a great way to stay in touch with former co-workers. You can opt-in and choose what information to share by logging into your member self-service account.

The **Member Self-Service website** can be accessed by going to [www.resdc.net](http://www.resdc.net) and clicking on the menu item for "Member Login." Please note that you must have an email address on file with us in order to log-in. If you don't currently receive emails from RESDC and would like to like to join both our email list and the member website, send us your full name and email address by contacting us at [resdc@resdc.net](mailto:resdc@resdc.net) or by calling (619) 688-9229.

We encourage you to also follow RESDC on **Facebook** and **Twitter**. We share photos from our events, news from around San Diego County, articles related to retirement and pensions, and notices about community events.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RetiredEmployeesofSanDiegoCounty>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/RESDC>

And on the main **RESDC website**, [www.resdc.net](http://www.resdc.net), you can:

- Read current and past editions of *THE NETWORK*.
- See an overview of all available member discounts and benefits.
- View photos from our events.
- Stay up-to-date on pension and retirement news through our News Now page, a curated list of recent articles in the media. □