



KIT

Keeping in Touch

The Newsletter of the Marin County Association of Retired Employees
Member California Retired County Employees Association (CRCEA)

DECEMBER
2025

www.mcareinfo.org

"VALUE, VOICE and VISIBILITY"

MCARE is the Voice of Current and Future MCERA Retirees

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by GENE PENNINGTON



Judy and I wish you and your families a wonderful holiday season! Enjoy this special time of year creating wonderful memories with your loved ones near and far. We hope you had a great Thanksgiving and didn't overdo it! We'll be celebrating Christmas with our new great grandson who arrived just four months ago and our new great granddaughter who will turn one year old this month. That makes five great grandchildren for us!

There was a nice turnout for our November luncheon with 51 people in attendance! Thank you. Let's keep it up!

Congratulations to our newly elected Directors At Large. They start their 2-year term January 1, 2026. They are:

Ken Holmes – County of Marin
Jeanne Villa – Novato Fire District
Linda Meehan – KIT Newsletter Editor

I look forward to working with our Board to help MCARE continue to move forward and serve our members. A big THANK YOU to Rich Arrow, our Nominations and Election Chair, for his time and work to manage our election.



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Our annual Holiday Party is December 9, 2025! This year we'll be celebrating our 55th Anniversary as well as the holidays. We'll have entertainment featuring Dan Zemelman, pianist, and Dexter Williams, upright bassist. We're expecting a record-setting number of people so be sure to make your reservations soon! To learn more and to register, see page 3 of this newsletter or go to mcareinfo.org/event-6113657

REMEMBER there is NO January 2026 luncheon.

We have exciting and interesting speakers planned for 2026. We start with our February 17, 2026, luncheon with Mark S. Porter, Financial Planner. He will have suggestions on how you can improve your finances and new ways to make your money work for you. Next, we have our favorite speaker, Ken Holmes, for our March 17, 2026, luncheon. We'll publish more about our events and speakers in upcoming KITs and on our website. To keep up to date, log in at mcareinfo.org/ and then go to mcareinfo.org/sys/website/?pagelid=7741

(cont'd on page 2)



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (cont'd from page 1)

Highlights of our November 5, 2025, Board Meeting

- We will decide at our next Board Meeting when to start a new membership survey. This will serve as a foundation for developing a new 5-year strategic plan.
- We approved a new procedure titled "MCARE Records Retention Procedures-24- 3". This establishes procedures for our volunteers for our Records Retention Policy.
- The 2026 Budget was approved.
- Jeanne Villa, MCERA Board Member, updated us on MCERA.
- Committee Chairs who were present gave updates on their respective committees.

Our MCARE Committees (listed below) need help in 2026. If you're interested, please let me know or contact any Board Member or our Committee Chairs. Their contact information is on page 7 of this newsletter and can also be found at:

mcareinfo.org/Contact

The Committee Chair appointments for 2026 are:

- Budget and Finance Committee – Richard Arrow, Chair
- Membership Committee – Edith Simonson, Chair
- Nominations and Elections Committee – Rich Arrow, Chair
- Scholarship Committee – Ken Holmes, Chair
- KIT Newsletter Committee – Linda Meehan, Chair
- Records Retention Committee – Eric Davis, Chair
- Legislative Committee – Gus Guinan, Chair
- Audit Committee – Gene Pennington, Chair

All our Board's past and current agendas, minutes, Treasurer's reports and budgets, Articles of Incorporation, current bylaws, and Policies and Procedures can be accessed by logging into

MCAREInfo.org. Then go to:

mcareinfo.org/Board-Content.



TREASURER'S REPORT

by RICH ARROW

OCTOBER 2025

CHECKING/PETTY CASH	\$54,624
CD/MONEY MARKET FUND	<u>45,257</u>
TOTAL BALANCE	<u>\$99,881</u>

Congratulations NEW RETIREES

Kevin Beardsley	MSMVCD
Lynne Foster-Liebmann	DA
Phyllis Gray	Assessor Recorder
Michelle Johnson	H&HS
Carey Lando	DPW
Annmarie Lundy	IST
Richard Mache	DPW
John Mohrman Jr.	MSMVCD
Megan Numair	HR
Esther Ottolini	Beneficiary
Lynn Paterson	Beneficiary
Leslie Witt	Community Development

welcome

New MCARE Members

Kathleen Koblick	H&HS
Peggy Toth	DA

IN MEMORIAM

*Our Deepest Sympathy is Extended
to the Friends and Families of:*

<u>Breanna Brown</u> *	Fire
Erin Goldsbrough	Beneficiary
Larry Heon	Public Defender
Larry Olsen	Beneficiary
Patricia Mazzini	Beneficiary
Beverly Mountanos	Beneficiary
<u>Joan Thayer</u> *	Assessor-Recorder
Susan Weiss	Beneficiary

**Click to view obituary*

A surviving spouse is eligible for MCARE membership.

For enrollment, email: esimonson1@verizon.net

HAPPY
Holidays

Holiday Luncheon and 55th Anniversary Celebration

December 9, 2025

The Club Restaurant at McInnis Park Golf Center • 3501 Smith Ranch Rd, San Rafael

11:30 am Social Hour • 12:30 pm Luncheon

\$29 per person

This is our most popular luncheon and this year we are also celebrating our 55th Anniversary!

You are encouraged to register ASAP. **Deadline to RSVP is FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5.**

Menu

Choice of:

GRILLED SALMON

mango papaya salsa, starch, vegetables

CHICKEN PARMESAN

panko-crusted w/mozzarella, marinara sauce

PORK SCALLOPINI

boneless cutlet w/mushroom sauce, starch, vegetables

EGGPLANT PARMIGIANA (vegetarian)

Options for making your reservation:

- Register and pay online at mcareinfo.org/event-6113657
- Register online, request an invoice and pay at the door.
- Pay at the door, but please **RSVP AHEAD OF TIME – by December 5.**

Scholarship Raffle

Please bring a donation for the raffle — wine, candy, gift baskets, gift cards, specialty gifts, plants, etc. 100% of the proceeds from the raffle benefit the MCARE Scholarship Program.

Santa Cop /First Responder Elves

A representative from the Santa Cop program will collect new UNWRAPPED toys for boys & girls aged 8-12. Gift cards for \$20 (Target, etc.) are very welcome gifts. If you bring a gift for the Santa Cop program, **you will receive 2 FREE raffle tickets!**



HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT!



Dan Zelman
Pianist

Dan Zelman will be back for his third year with us, accompanied by Dexter Williams.

See their bios on our [Luncheon page](#).



Dexter Williams
Upright Bassist



Anniversary CELEBRATION

Join us for our annual Holiday Party on December 9, 2025,
as we also celebrate 55 years of representing retired
employees from 9 different public agencies!

See page 3 for more details or go to [mcareinfo.org/
event-6113657](http://mcareinfo.org/event-6113657) for details and registration.

MEMORIES OF THE EARLY DAYS OF MCARE



BLOODY BREAKOUT IN SAN RAFAEL, AUGUST 1970

by Gene Pennington, Ret. SRPD

Like many of us in Law Enforcement, I have many wonderful memories of my career and many that were shocking and terrible. I want to share one specific memory from 1970 involving several people that resulted in the death of some of them. From a personal view, this event shocked me at the time and saddened me to my core. To see such an event and watch so many people die at one time is what I will never forget. With that feeling in my mind, I want to dedicate this article to Superior Court Judge Harold Haley and Superior Court Judge Gary Thomas.

In 1970 I was working for the San Rafael Police Department in Investigations as a Property Crimes and Stolen Vehicle Detective. 1970 was an interesting year in the history of San Rafael Police Department. We had a new Chief of Police, Joe Brusatori, who was the first appointed Chief in the history of San Rafael. Before that, the Chief was elected by the voters of San Rafael.

On August 7, 1970, an all-County radio broadcast ordered all officers to respond to the Civic Center for a possible hostage situation. I joined several other SRPD officers and arrived at the West side of the Justice wing of the Civic Center near the North Archway. We all took up positions of cover behind an under-construction retaining wall.

Heavily armed officers from San Quentin Prison had positioned themselves on the other side of the archway and parked a couple of their vans in the middle of the road to block the exit to Civic Center Drive.

Much to my surprise, the hostages and the suspects walked out from the building exit and towards a van that was parked to the West of our location just a few feet from where we were positioned. They all entered the van and then the van backed out.

Despite the obvious roadblock, the van turned to leave, choosing the closest road leading under the archway that led to Civic Center Drive. The van drove a few feet and then came to a full stop as it approached the San Quentin vans blocking its path. Suddenly, shots started ringing out and I could see the suspects' van violently rocking back and forth. A deep fear gripped me, and I was afraid that the hostages would be killed. All of us in my group held our fire. We waited to see if anybody would exit the van and if they did, we were ready to act.



The firing suddenly stopped, and the van stopped rocking. Somebody yelled out "cease fire" in our group. I waited a couple of seconds and then another officer and I ran to the van and opened the doors, weapons drawn.



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BLOODY BREAKOUT IN SAN RAFAEL, AUGUST 1970 *(cont'd from page 4)*

by Gene Pennington, Ret. SRPD

We later learned that when the shooting started, Gary Thomas had picked up a revolver from the floor of the van and fired several shots at the hostage takers. Judge Haley was killed by a shotgun blast at the start of the gun fire. We also learned later that some of the shots that killed the hostage takers were also fired by the San Quentin guards.

Gary Thomas was taken from the van and placed in an ambulance. One of the women was hurt and was given aid by CHP Officer Tim Miller.



As the van was inspected by other officers, somebody noticed what appeared to be a stick of dynamite. The driver was pulled from the van so the suspected explosive could be more closely inspected. It turned out to be a road flare.

The black males involved were Johnathan Jackson, Ruchell Magee, James D. McClain, and William Christmas. Jackson, McClain, and Christmas were killed. Ruchell Magee and Gary Thomas were seriously injured. Gary Thomas recovered from his wounds after several years of treatment and rehab. He lost his ability to walk and was confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life. Gary Thomas was later appointed to the bench as a Marin County Superior Court Judge where he served for many years.

There was a subsequent trial for Ruchell Magee who pled guilty to aggravated kidnapping and was released from prison in 2023 under California's compassionate release law. He passed away that same year.

As the investigation progressed, evidence later resulted in the charging of Angela Davis as an accomplice accused of buying the weapons used in the hostage taking. She was charged with aggravated kidnapping and first-degree murder in the death of Judge Harold Haley. I testified at her trial. She was later acquitted of those charges.

A few years after the incident, a memorial to honor Judge Harold Haley was erected behind the retaining wall.

*Pictures used with permission from Tim Miller,
Retired CHP*



CELEBRATING 55 YEARS OF MCARE (Part Two)

by Mary Ann Gallardo, Immediate Past President

MCARE currently hosts two special events annually: Spring BBQ at Stafford Lake in Novato and our Holiday Party at The Club at McInnis Park in San Rafael.

When I joined in mid 2003 all events were well-attended. Around 2010, attendance was starting to dwindle for some unknown reason, possibly attrition. We weren't recruiting as many new members and fewer members were stepping up to help.

The summer and Christmas parties were originally held at Deer Park Villa in Fairfax. It was a lovely setting surrounded by redwood trees, lots of space, and free parking. At the summer party we sat at round tables outdoors and usually had about 90 attendees. It was

joyful and fun. We usually had a theme, such as Hawaiian or Mad Hatters, etc. Roberto Soriano was Sgt. At Arms for many years and helped with planning, reservations, and receipt of monies. The food was marvelous at Deer Park under the Ghiringhelli family with a plentiful and varied buffet. Debbie Ghiringhelli continues to cater our Spring BBQ now at Stafford Lake.

The Christmas party was very festive as Deer Park really dressed up the place with stringed lights, candles, and lovely decorations. We dined indoors and usually took up two banquet rooms. Attendance was about 100 people, all sitting very close to one another and dressed in holiday garb. We had a plethora of great raffle prizes donated by members at the special events.

(cont'd on page 6)

CELEBRATING 55 YEARS OF MCARE (Part Two) *(cont'd from page 5)*

by Mary Ann Gallardo, Immediate Past President

Our luncheons were later held at San Rafael Joe's for many years and were moved in 2024 to The Club at McInnis Park. The board also reduced the number of luncheons in Marin with remaining months in Sonoma County to accommodate members there.

Around 2005, as President I suggested to the board that we create a scholarship fund for children and grandchildren of MCARE members. The board was a bit lukewarm on the idea but my friend and fellow board member, Tom Hendricks, really liked it. He asked if he could coordinate the program with me, so with his political connections as retired County Counsel, he arranged meetings with then Superintendent of Schools, Mary Jane Burke. She gave us sample scholarship applications, and Tom and I chose to pattern MCARE's scholarship after San Diego County's scholarship program. When we submitted the program for board approval, it was like pulling teeth to get the board and members to approve funding three \$1,000 scholarships.

Tom and I liked the idea of naming the scholarships in memory of three deceased members who were very instrumental in the founding of MCARE: Joe Coffrini, Bob Roumiguere, and Agnes Nathanson.

We needed a fiduciary to handle the funds and distribution to the recipients. Again, Tom's influence enabled us to establish a relationship with Marin Community Foundation's Tom Peters. The Office of Education and Marin Community Foundation still assist us to this date. We now offer three MCARE-funded scholarships for \$3,000 each, plus a fourth \$3,000 scholarship generously funded by an MCARE member.

Our first scholarships were awarded in July 2006. The program ran smoothly for years. After about 10 years, I started to burn out so Tom Hendricks took over as he didn't want the program to end. Tom did a great job raising funds at our luncheons and continued collaborations with Office of Education and Community Foundation. Tom stepped down January 2022 and Ken Holmes took over the scholarship program...it is flourishing under his watch.

Tom Hendricks passed in January 2023, and to honor him and his many contributions to MCARE, the board renamed

the Agnes Nathanson scholarship for him. Tom had often told me that the scholarship program was the best thing MCARE had ever done and he was proud to be a part of it.

Ann Gregory served as President and editor of the KIT newsletter simultaneously. The newsletter was mailed monthly to all members and was very costly. Ann handled everything from writing all of the articles, taking it to a print shop in San Rafael called Poor Ann's Press, then collecting the copies and mailing them. She had a few volunteers and personally distributed copies to most county departments at the Civic Center for many years. She did a heck of a job.

The newsletter is now offered in digital form via email, thanks to Gene Pennington who created our website with a database that enables our current editor to distribute the newsletter by email, thus significantly reducing costs.

Ann was instrumental in introducing Gene to our board. I was President when he gave us a demonstration of the possibilities of having a website. It was all Greek to me and most of the board. It took about a year to get it all fine-tuned so members could create their own log in. Our webpage is MCAREinfo.org.

I've been a member for 22 years and have gotten to know many wonderful people. I believe Johnny DeCarlo, who is 101, is our oldest living member. He enjoys leading us in song at Christmas parties and always brings joy to the room. He and his buddy, Jack Golan both retired from County Parks and Recreation and have been very active with MCARE over the years...they could probably tell us some great stories. Jack is responsible for getting us the Stafford Lake picnic area for our annual Spring BBQ.

I believe I'm the last Immediate Past President after the death of Ed Henry years ago. Gene Pennington is the current President and when he "retires" from that position, he'll become the Immediate Past President.

I hope our membership continues to increase and flourish as new blood contributes to our organization's growth. New ideas take a while to digest, but it's what makes us succeed and thrive.

CONGRATULATIONS MCARE FOR MAKING IT TO 55 YEARS! Let's keep it going to infinity and beyond. Many thanks to all for supporting us. It's been a blast!

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Luncheons are held on the second Tuesday of each month, with the exception of January & July when there are no luncheons.



09 HOLIDAY LUNCHEON & 55TH ANNIVERSARY



THE CLUB RESTAURANT

McInnis Park Golf Center
350 Smith Ranch Rd., San Rafael

11:30 Social Hour • Noon Lunch • \$29

Your choice of entrée: Grilled Salmon, Chicken Parmesan, Pork Scallopini, or Eggplant Parmigiana

Please register and pay online:

mcareinfo.org/event-6113657

REGISTRATION DEADLINE December 5, 2025



07 MCARE BOARD MEETING

ZOOM ONLY

10:00 am – Noon

To attend by Zoom, please register with this link:

mcareinfo.org/event-6327880.



10 MONTHLY LUNCHEON

THE CLUB RESTAURANT

McInnis Park Golf Center
350 Smith Ranch Rd., San Rafael

11:30 Social Hour • 12:30 Lunch • \$27

Speaker: Mark S. Porter, Financial Planner

Menu: TBA



MCARE

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REMINDERS & TO DO LIST

LUNCHEONS

Additional details are on pages 3,6 & 9.

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

HOLIDAY LUNCHEON and MCARE 55th ANNIVERSARY

THE CLUB RESTAURANT

McInnis Golf Park, San Rafael

For more information or to

register and pay online: mcareinfo.org/event-6113657



NO LUNCHEON IN JANUARY.

MCARE BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

10:00 am – Noon

ZOOM ONLY

Register with this link:

mcareinfo.org/event-6327880

Age in place with Home Equity



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415/ 499-9780

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