



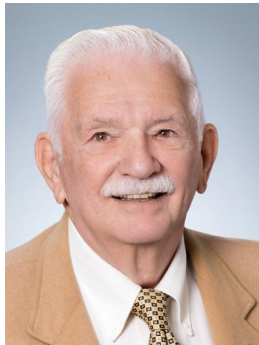
THE INTERCOM

Newsletter of the California Retired
County Employees Association (CRCEA)

April 2026

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I sit down to compose some words for this message, I am eyeing mid-April where we will be gathering to exchange information and thoughts at our Spring Conference.

I have seen the agenda that the folks in Santa Barbara County have worked to put together, and I am confident that each of you that attend will be both informed and entertained. As this is our only full conference this year, I know that RESBC (Retired Employees of Santa Barbara County) have worked diligently to make it a positive event. I look forward to seeing you there.

As we speak of the conference, we need to also think about upcoming change(s) that were approved by the

delegates relating to the format and frequency. The format may be shorter and different, but the semi-annual meeting of the delegates is still an important part of the continuing efforts of CRCEA. There will be "bumps in the road", and we will continue to work out the issues going forward.

As some of you have noticed, the monthly Executive Committee meetings are cancelled from time to time. This does not mean that nothing is being done. Communication is on-going. Issues are quickly being discussed. Member issues are addressed. If it is decided to cancel a meeting, it is a result of there not being any major matters to be discussed or resolved. It has long been the agreement that to have a meeting just to have a meeting is not worthwhile.

One thing that CRCEA has recently done in the legislative area is to formally support AB 1601 as it relates to Sonoma County. You may, or may not know, that Sonoma County does NOT have a formula based Cost-Of-Living-Adjustment (COLA) in its pension provisions. They

do, from time to time, provide an ad hoc COLA when the County and the retirement system agree that they have some funding. But even that is not necessarily provided for in the retirement law. AB 1601 formalizes that the County and retirement system will work together to work out a mechanism to provide a COLA.

My letter specifically stated the following:

"The employees of Sonoma County put in 20 to 30 years of service after which they receive a pension benefit. Unfortunately, after another 10 or 20 or 30 years into retirement, that benefit has effectively diminished as the costs of inflation eat away at it.

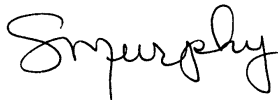
This legislation continues to recognize those retirees for their service to the citizens by allowing the County of Sonoma and the Sonoma County Employees Retirement Association to work together to provide a cost-of-living adjustment to those retirees in an attempt to keep their spending power in line with the current inflation."



Let's hope for a successful result.

In closing, let me remind each of you to continue to enjoy the retirement years you worked so consistently for. Keep tabs on your health, both physical and mental. Stay in touch with old workmates and other friends. If these are the Golden Years, let's make sure they stay gold and don't turn to lead.

Until next time.....



SKIP MURPHY
President

7 steps to happiness

	think less, feel more	
↓		↑
	talk less, listen more	
↓		↑
	watch less, do more	
↓		↑
	frown less, smile more	
↓		↑
	fear less, love more	
↓		↑
	judge less, accept more	
↓		↑
	complain less, appreciate more	

Upcoming CRCEA Conference

**Santa Barbara (RESBC)
April 19 — 22, 2026**

WE HOPE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO JOIN US FOR GREAT INFORMATION, NETWORKING, AND, OF COURSE, FRIENDS AND FUN!



PLEASE SEE PAGE 3 FOR THE NEW CRCEA CONFERENCE SCHEDULE



TEN CONVERSATION STARTERS

- What's a small decision you made years ago that changed your life in a big way?
- What's something you've learned recently that surprised you?
- Which decade of your life taught you the most, and why?
- What's a tradition from your childhood that you still love?
- What's a skill you'd enjoy learning now, just for fun?
- What's the best piece of advice you've ever received?
- What's a place you've visited that you'd love to see again?
- What's a hobby you've picked up — or returned to — later in life?
- What's a book, movie, or show you always recommend?
- What's something you're grateful for this month?

NEW CRCEA CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Spring 2026 - Santa Barbara (last of the old schedule)	Fall 2026 - Board of Directors Business Session Set by CRCEA Secretary
Spring 2027 - Division 1 Full Conference	Fall 2027 - Board of Directors Business Session Set by CRCEA Secretary
Spring 2028 - Division 2 Full Conference	Fall 2028 - Board of Directors Business Session Set by CRCEA Secretary
Spring 2029 - Division 1 Full Conference	Fall 2029 - Board of Directors Business Session Set by CRCEA Secretary
Spring 2030 - Division 2 Full Conference	Fall 2030 - Board of Directors Business Session Set by CRCEA Secretary
Spring 2031 - Division 1 Full Conference	Fall 2031 - Board of Directors Business Session Set by CRCEA Secretary
Spring 2032 - Division 2 Full Conference	Fall 2032 - Board of Directors Business Session Set by CRCEA Secretary
Spring 2033 - Division 1 Full Conference	Fall 2033 - Board of Directors Business Session Set by CRCEA Secretary
Spring 2034 - Division 2 Full Conference	Fall 2034 - Board of Directors Business Session Set by CRCEA Secretary

**HELPFUL WEBSITES
SOME YOU MAY KNOW, SOME MAY BE NEW TO YOU**

Health, Wellness & Safety

- **National Institute on Aging (NIA)** — <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health> Clear, reliable health information designed for older adults.
- **MedlinePlus (NIH/NLM)** — <https://medlineplus.gov> Trusted medical information, medications, and easy to read guides.
- **Medicare.gov** — <https://www.medicare.gov> Official Medicare site for coverage, claims, and plan comparisons.

Money, Benefits & Retirement

- **Social Security Administration** — <https://www.ssa.gov> Benefits, retirement planning tools, and account management.
- **BenefitsCheckUp (National Council on Aging)** — <https://www.benefitscheckup.org> Helps older adults find federal, state, and local benefits.
- **Consumer Financial Protection Bureau – Older Americans** <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/educator-tools/resources-for-older-adults> Guidance on scams, financial protection, and safe money management.

Learning, Brain Health & Hobbies

- **AARP** — <https://www.aarp.org> Articles, discounts, fraud alerts, caregiving resources, and more.
- **Senior Planet (from AARP)** — <https://seniorplanet.org> Free online classes on technology, fitness, creativity, and digital skills.
- **Khan Academy** — <https://www.khanacademy.org> Free courses in math, history, art, and lifelong learning.

Technology Help & Digital Confidence

- **TechBoomers** — <https://techboomers.com> Step-by-step tutorials for apps, websites, and online safety.
- **Cyber-Seniors** — <https://cyberseniors.org> Tech training, videos, and one-on-one help for older adults.

Social Connection & Community

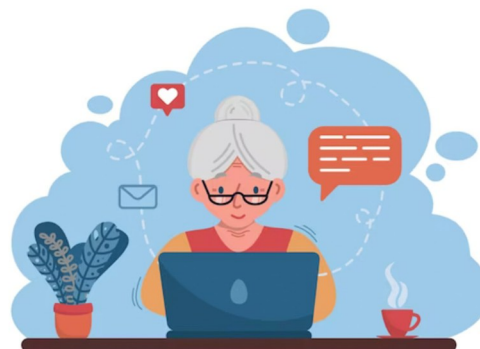
- **Meetup** — <https://www.meetup.com> Find local groups for walking, hobbies, book clubs, and social events.
- **Nextdoor** — <https://www.nextdoor.com> Neighborhood updates, recommendations, and local help.

Caregiving & Local Support

- **Family Caregiver Alliance** — <https://www.caregiver.org> Guides, support groups, and practical caregiving tools.
- **Eldercare Locator (U.S. Administration on Aging)** <https://eldercare.acl.gov> Finds local senior services, transportation, meals, and support programs.

Miscellaneous

<https://www.usa.gov> Central portal for all federal services and agencies
<https://www.benefits.gov> Eligibility finder for federal and state benefits
<https://www.disasterassistance.gov> Disaster aid, shelters, and recovery resources



What Is the MIND Diet?

**This well researched eating plan can give your brain a boost.
by Kimberly Goad, AARP**

In 2004, a team of researchers at Rush University Medical Center enlisted a group of older adults who were participating in the ongoing Rush Memory and Aging Project (MAP) for a spin-off study. MAP began in 1997 with the goal of pinpointing the factors associated with memory loss in older adults, with an emphasis on Alzheimer's disease, the most common cause of dementia.

Researchers now wanted to zero in on diet; specifically, the effects of certain foods and nutrients as a preventive measure against Alzheimer's. Using past research, they developed a MIND diet score partially based on the Mediterranean and DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diets, both of which have been shown to benefit brain health.

For nine years, participants agreed to keep track of what they ate and then fill out a dietary questionnaire at an annual cognitive assessment. At the end of that period, researchers found that participants with the highest MIND diet scores had a significantly slower rate of cognitive decline, compared with those who had the lowest scores.

Those initial findings, which were reviewed in *Alzheimer's & Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association*, provided the basis for the Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay (MIND) diet.

More than 10 years later, research continues to show the cognitive benefits of following the MIND diet. In one study of people ages 45 to 75, published in May 2025 in *Current Developments in Nutrition*, participants who closely followed the MIND diet were significantly less likely to develop dementia than those who didn't adhere to the plan.

What Do You Eat on MIND?

(Source: *Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health*)

Eat From 9 Food Groups:

- Leafy green vegetables: at least six servings per week
- Other vegetables: at least one serving per day
- Berries: at least two servings per week
- Whole grains: at least three servings per day
- Fish: one serving per week
- Poultry: two servings per week
- Beans: four servings per week
- Nuts: five servings per week
- Extra virgin olive oil: two tablespoons a day

And Avoid These 5 Food Types

- Red meat
- Pastries and sweets
- Cheese
- Butter/margarine
- Fast/fried food

A greater adherence to the MIND diet was also found to be associated with slower brain shrinkage and gray matter loss, corresponding with an 8 to 20 percent reduction in age-related changes, according to a recent study published in the *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery & Psychiatry*. The study examined over 1,600 middle-aged and older individuals from the Framingham Heart Study Offspring cohort over an average of 12 years.

What foods are allowed on the MIND diet?

Like the Mediterranean and DASH diets, the MIND eating plan is made up of plant-based foods and limits the intake of foods high in saturated fat. Unlike these diets, though, MIND specifies 10 "brain healthy" food groups to eat — among them, vegetables, berries, olive oil, nuts, whole grains and beans — and five unhealthy foods to limit (red meat, fast and fried foods, pastries, cheese and other sweets).

"The MIND diet would be most appealing to those who want to focus on brain health as they age," Liz Weinandy, an outpatient dietitian and clinical instructor at Ohio State University's Wexner Medical Center. "If you have a family history of Alzheimer's or dementia, this diet may be especially attractive."

With MIND, there's particular emphasis on two superfoods: leafy green vegetables and berries. Greens such as kale, collard greens and spinach are rich in folate, vitamin E,

carotenoids and flavonoids — all nutrients that have been related to lower risk of dementia and cognitive decline. That's why the MIND plan calls for a minimum of six servings per week.

And while all fruit is good for health in general, research shows particular benefits from berries, especially blueberries. A recent review of studies published in *Frontiers in Pharmacology* suggests regular consumption of berries — the researchers cited blackberries and mulberries, in addition to blueberries — improves memory and slows cognitive decline, thanks to the abundance of anti-inflammatory plant pigments called anthocyanins, as well as total flavonoids.

MIND recommends at least two servings of berries a week.

What are the health benefits of the MIND diet?

The emphasis is on brain health. The 10 “brain-healthy” food groups specified on the MIND plan are rich in certain vitamins, carotenoids and flavonoids that are believed to protect the brain by reducing oxidative stress and inflammation.

In the initial study, participants who rigorously followed the eating plan lowered their risk of Alzheimer's by as much as 53 percent, while those who followed it even moderately well reduced their risk by about 35 percent.

Although the focus is on brain health, the MIND diet may also benefit heart health and reduce the risk for diabetes and certain cancers because it includes components of the Mediterranean and DASH diets, both of which have been shown to lower the risk of these diseases. The effects of the MIND diet on cognition, however, showed greater effects than either of these diets.

Can you lose weight on the MIND diet?

Yes, but ...

Success depends on personal preference. “The MIND diet is very specific, so it can turn people off,” Weinandy says. “If you don't like dark, green leafy vegetables or you love your cheese, it may be a deal-breaker.”

And since there's no rigid meal plan with MIND, you'll need to create your own based on the foods recommended. If you don't cook, that may be a challenge; if you like grabbing food to go or eating out, you may need to spend extra time picking restaurants and reviewing menus.

On the other hand, the plan offers plenty of freedom to choose. Although it recommends daily and weekly amounts of particular food groups, you're not restricted to eating only these foods.

“The key to success is choosing foods within each food group that meet personal preferences, cultural backgrounds and are generally available,” says Alice H. Lichtenstein, a nutrition scientist at the USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts

University. “This allows each person to customize their diet and the flexibility to change with the seasons.”

But with all the emphasis on fresh produce and lean proteins, you can lose weight on the MIND diet without missing out on nutrients. A study published in 2023 in *The New England Journal of Medicine* found that participants who followed the MIND diet for three years and were coached to cut about 250 calories from their daily routine lost an average of about 11 pounds.

Kimberly Goad is a New York-based journalist who has covered health for some of the nation's top consumer publications. AARP online article.



6 Healthy Sleep Habits for Older Adults

Older adults need about 7-9 hours of sleep each night. Getting a good night's sleep supports physical health, mental health, and overall well-being. Improve your sleep with these tips.

Develop a regular sleep schedule and bedtime routine

Avoid napping in the late afternoon or evening

Keep your bedroom quiet and at a comfortable temperature

Try to avoid electronic screens, such as cell phones and TVs, in the bedroom

Exercise at regular times each day, but not within three hours of bedtime

Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and large meals late in the day



Learn more at: www.nia.nih.gov/sleep-tips.



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