



The **Billy&Spanner**



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Ray Storms

As you know the Association has been pushing forward on a few initiatives, such as expanding Employee Assistance Program (EAP) benefits to retirees and the upcoming City Council elections. While these are areas of a singular focus, we continue to manage a multitude of issues that impact retirees.

Many of the issues we work in we learn from you, our members. An issue is brought to the attention of myself, or a fellow Board member, and we work with you to either find out the answers to your question or connect you with the right person at the City who can. We can't learn about these issues, however, if we don't hear from you.

I encourage everyone to check in from time-to-time at one of our monthly Association meetings. If you used to come to our meetings pre-COVID, check us out again. We've changed the structure of our meetings, making them more streamlined.

There's two ways now you can join us. In person at the SJPOA hall which comes with lunch and virtually through Zoom. The in-person sessions start at 11 AM to allow people to get lunch and get settled. We moved the start of the Zoom meeting to 11:30 AM to coincide with the start of the business meeting. This cuts out the delay on the front end our Zoomers previously experienced, waiting for the in-person attendees to grab lunch.

Our meetings are still a good place to reconnect with familiar faces you haven't seen in awhile, even on Zoom. We do want to keep providing our meetings through Zoom for those who cannot attend in person due to distance, health or just personal schedule. It does, however, take a fair amount of logistical work to do. So, we really appreciate everyone who joins us.

As always, please enjoy your retirement. You earned it!

I'M DEAD. NOW WHAT?



The Association continues to give away this book.

A useful and helpful planner to give you peace of mind.

It has important information about your belongings, business affairs, and wishes. It helps organize vital details about contacts, health and financial issues, etc.

Contact Walter Bugna at believe42218@earthlink.net if you want a copy. Please include your name, current phone and current mailing address in your e-mail.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOURSELF

Nancy Williams, LCSW-R, Commissioner of Social Services and Mental Health

To protect our mental health, she said it's all about balance, especially with news being a 24/7 operation.

A war in Eastern Europe and a looming humanitarian crisis have triggered fresh waves of anxiety and depression for Americans who have spent two years trying to survive an unprecedented period of instability, including a public health crisis, a recession, political upheaval, supply chain problems and inflation and rising gas prices.

Pain, sadness and confusion swept across social media Wednesday and Thursday, with people expressing shock and frustration at the unfolding crisis and mounting casualty count. Many said they felt powerless to help.

"It's coming at us from all sides," said Williams. "Maybe schedule a time during the day that you catch up on the news and have that really be the only time you do that."

Lawrence Palinkas, a USC professor who studies mental health, noted that, "as individuals, we may be able to cope with any one of these events. Having to cope with all of them simultaneously is proving to be overwhelming for many people."

Other people cope with stressful news events by trying to learn as much about them as possible, he said. Understanding what is happening can bring a sense of relief, he said, but it can also bring a sense of obsession, or a feeling of falling down the rabbit hole. He suggests thinking carefully about "how much you can take in."

While it's right to think first and foremost about the impact on those caught up in the conflict, it's also completely normal to feel upset from afar by what we're seeing in Ukraine. "It's very natural to be distressed by what we're seeing, you wouldn't be human if you didn't." "This doesn't always lead to anxiety, some key ways to avoid it: eat well, get outside, put your phone down, connect with people, rest. These are all pretty basic pieces of advice, but when you're stressed, they can be difficult to do consistently."

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR RETIREMENT

KAREN M. AUGUSTINE, Firefighter, 27.29 years of service.

ANGELA JACOBS, Battalion Chief, 26.33 years of service.

BRYAN B. WILLIAMS, Police Officer, 25.00 years of service.

MARK T. WOMACK, Police Officer, 25.03 years of service.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

JOSEPH ARDIZZONE

KAREN AUGUSTINE

ADOLPH CARRANZA

MICHAEL DEL BANDO

SAUL FLORES

CHRIS HARMOUNT

JAMES LE

PAUL MARSHALL

KELVIN PHAM

JEFFREY SILVA

JASON SUAREZ

WILLIAM THORNTON.

NATHAN TRANG.

BILL INTRODUCED IN CONGRESS TO PROTECT TAX CREDIT FOR RETIRED LAW ENFORCEMENT & FIREFIGHTERS



The following is a summary from Police1.com describing a new Federal bill introduced in March to assist retired police officers and firefighters with a potential tax credit for paying retiree health care premiums. **We are in the process of examining whether our members would qualify for this tax credit based on the bill's parameters.**

A bipartisan bill introduced to Congress this week would make it easier for public safety retirees to access a tax benefit for their healthcare insurance premiums, according to a press release Monday from Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA).

Spanberger, a former police officer, and Rep. Steve Chabot (R-OH) are sponsoring the bill. “Many public safety officers retire earlier than people in other occupations because of the physical demands and unique job hazards they face on the job,” the release says. “Unfortunately, when they retire early, many lose access to their employer-sponsored health coverage but are still years away from being eligible for Medicare.”

The Wally Bunker Healthcare Enhancement for Local Public Safety (HELPs) Retirees Improvement Act would amend an existing provision to make it easier for public safety retirees to take advantage of a tax benefit. According to the release, many retirees have trouble using the benefit because some pension plans don’t pay directly to insurance providers – a requirement of the current policy to withdraw \$3,000 tax-free from a pension plan annually. The bill aims to update and remove this requirement.

The bill is named after Wally Bunker, a 77-year-old retired police lieutenant in Spanberger’s district. Bunker has been unable to take advantage of the pre-tax benefit because of the direct payment requirement, according to the release.

According to lawmakers, the Wally Bunker HELPS Retirees Improvement Act would enact the following:

- Ensure that health insurance premiums, whether through the pension system or a third-party system, are tax deductible.
- Raise the tax credit from \$3,000 to \$6,000 to account for rising healthcare premiums.
- Ensure that stipends qualify for the income exclusion under IRS section 402(l).
- Help alleviate the burden imposed on public pension plans of having to interact and coordinate with numerous insurance companies on behalf of the related public safety retiree.



ASSOCIATION
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& FIREFIGHTERS

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www.retiredsjpoff.org

Volume 30
No. 3
March 2022



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ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

We will return to hosting our monthly membership meetings in-person at the SJPOA Hall.

Join us on Thursday, April 14, 2022, at 11AM for our next meeting. Per health orders, masks will be required indoors, except when eating.

The SJPOA Hall is located at 1151 N 4th St, San Jose, CA 95112. It's our intent to also host these meetings live as Zoom meetings. Check your emails for updates on the Zoom option.

CONDOLENCES

Retired Firefighter Virgil Hernandez passed away on March 17, 2022. Virgil served 25 years of service.
Retired Fire Captain Dave Moseley passed away on March 25 at the age of 84. He retired in 1995.
Association Member Nancy Louise passed away on February 13, 2022. She was preceded in death by her husband, SJPD Officer Dick Anthony #1538.

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