



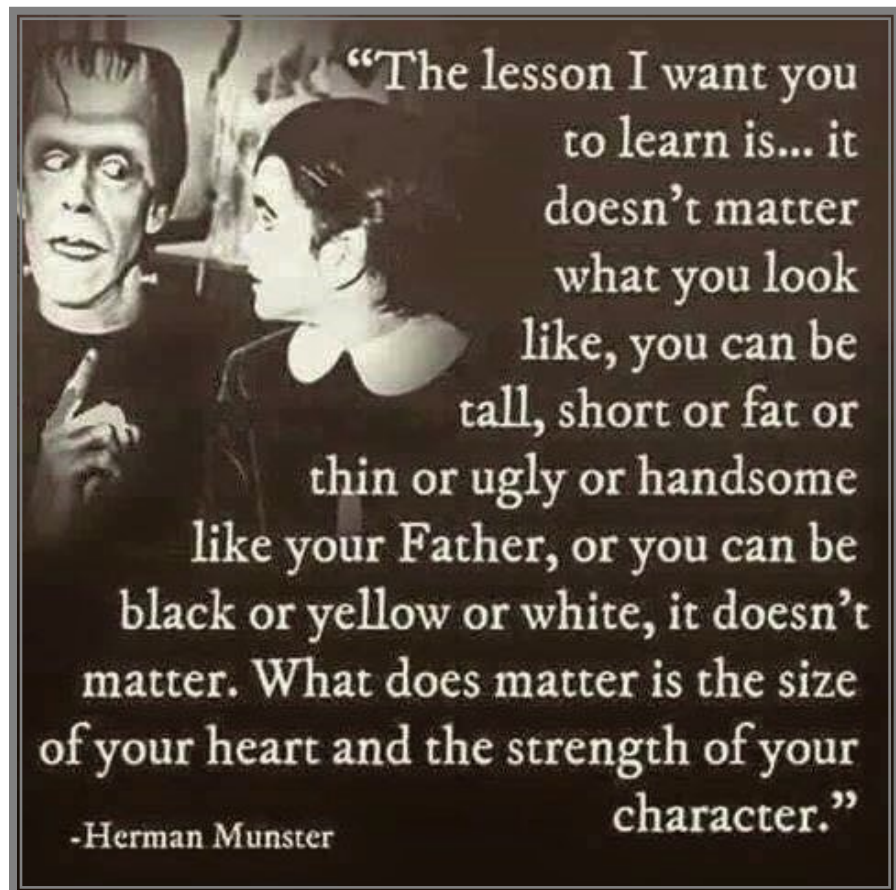
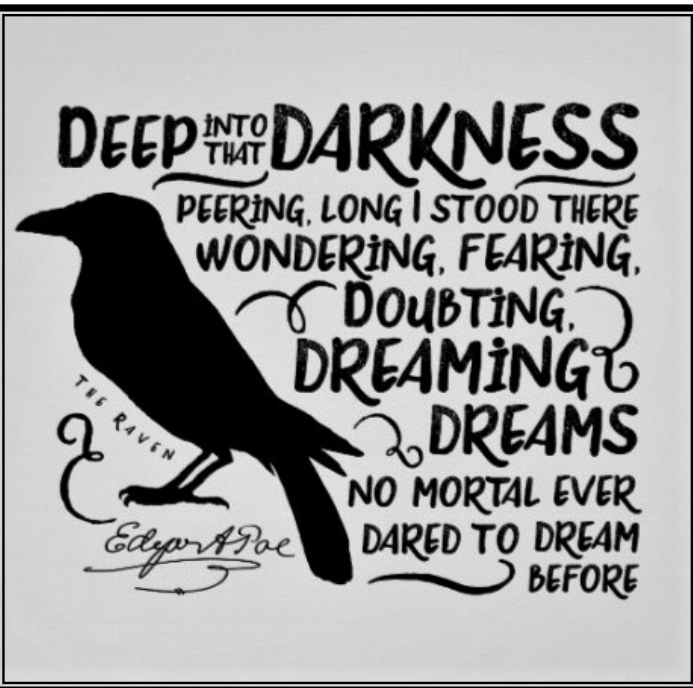
The Mountain Lines

RPEA



Chapter
078

15 October 2020 Volume 1, Issue 15



“The lesson I want you to learn is... it doesn't matter what you look like, you can be tall, short or fat or thin or ugly or handsome like your Father, or you can be black or yellow or white, it doesn't matter. What does matter is the size of your heart and the strength of your character.”

-Herman Munster

From the President/Legislative Chair's Desk by Evelyn Naake

This is what's happening in the latest RPEA news. First David Soares, Legislative Council member and Representative to CalPERS puts forth an opinion on Assembly Bill 2743. Secondly, following David Soares is a letter to Henry Jones, CalPERS Board President. This letter came as a result of the RPEA Board of Directors' August 31st meeting on Zoom technology. It is in regard to Henry Jones' recent behavior in his position as CalPERS Board president.

David Soares, Legislative Committee and ad hoc CalPERS Expert Committee Letter

CalPERS is sponsoring Assembly Bill 2473 (Cooper), exempting "Private Loans" made by a "Public Investment Fund" from the California Public Records Act (CPRA).

"Private Loans" are a new and untested investment strategy which has not been commonly used for the investment of money held in trust to fund public pension obligations. These loans only have the potential to yield high interest if they are made to borrowers with a high risk of default — or even bankruptcy.

The California Retired Public Employees Association (RPEA) has offered amendments that would require such "Private Loans" to be subject to public disclosure once they become assets held in trust by a public pension fund.

Placing public trust funds into secret investments is a recipe for disaster. Keeping the transparency required by current law assures that the taxpayers will not be left holding the bag for losses caused by risky loans of public funds.

August 25, 2020

Henry Jones, President
Retired Member Representative
CalPERS Board of Administration
400 Q Street, Sacramento, CA 95811

Dear Henry:

It is with a heavy heart but a firm conviction that the Board of Directors of the Retired Public Employees' Association of California has voted to call for your resignation from the CalPERS Board of Administration.

Our demand is precipitated by your poor judgement and inappropriately secretive manner in the handling of the apparent Political Reform Act violations by Ben Meng while he was the CalPERS chief investment officer. We view your actions in this instance as a continuation of your long-standing posture of openly opposing transparency and accountability on the part of the CalPERS Board and staff.

With respect to Mr. Meng's apparent wrongdoing, you have participated in an apparent cover-up of unlawful behavior, and we fear that this cover-up is ongoing. It is an established fact from your own statements to Bloomberg Business that you had personal knowledge of Meng's violations months before they became public, that you knew of CalPERS CEO Marcie Frost's apparent plan to keep the violations a secret from the board as a whole and the public, and that you also knew that CalPERS had not reported Meng's violations to the FPPC. Further, as board president, one of the few legitimate powers you possess is the power to share with the board as a whole any information that you are aware is

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being kept from it. You cannot claim CEO Marcie Frost's apparent plan to keep the violations a secret from the board as a whole and the public, and that you also knew that CalPERS had not reported Meng's violations to the FPPC. Further, as board president, one of the few legitimate powers you possess is the power to share with the board as a whole any information that you are aware is being kept from it. You cannot claim that you lacked the authority to ensure that the full board was kept informed. Likewise, as a fiduciary, you had an individual responsibility to file a complaint with the FPPC, yet you failed to do so.

The CalPERS Board Governance policies that govern your behavior offer no authority for any of these actions. To the contrary, the Board President Delegation Resolution (94-03-B) specifically states the opposite in requiring that that Board President "Keep the Board Informed as to all actions taken under this delegation." The Board's own written policy VIII (B)(6) also makes it clear that, as Board President you have a duty to "...manage the effective and efficient flow of information to the Board, which is comprehensive and timely without being over detailed." Your fellow Board members are independent fiduciaries, and your failure to keep them informed has potentially exposed them to personal liability, as well as undermining public trust in the Board as a whole.

We see your actions in this instance as being consistent with your behavior throughout your board tenure. Some other failures to discharge your fiduciary duty to CalPERS members and beneficiaries that we highlight:

- Your failure to publicly support an investigation into the false statements about current CEO Marcie Frost's educational background and achievement.
- Your failure to publicly support an investigation into the similarly false credentials of former CalPERS CFO Charles Asubonten.
- Your failure to object to CalPERS labeling every internal audit since 2016 as "attorney-client privileged," which appears to be motivated by a fundamentally anti-transparency agenda.
- Your failure to prevent monthly board member briefings on board agenda matters from taking on the character of serial meetings.
Your failure to support free and fair CalPERS board elections.
- Your failure to properly investigate the resignations of other CalPERS executives.

More generally, we have been extremely disappointed on an ongoing basis by how you wield your power as Board President inappropriately in board meetings. You have shown yourself as eager to cut off anyone who would offer facts or viewpoints inconsistent with staff recommendation on a given agenda item. Despite the board showing generally too little interest in fact-finding or debate, on the rare occasion when it does occur you frequently respond by trying to shut it down. When RPEA or other members of the public offer comments that advance the collective understanding of an issue under consideration by the board you almost always refuse to acknowledge the information and have, on numerous occasions, cut off fellow board members who attempt to enter into a dialogue with those commenters to promote the board's understanding of an issue.

You sit in the seat on the Board of Administration reserved to represent retired beneficiaries, yet you appear to be more concerned with covering-up the incompetence and misdeeds of staff than in protecting our benefits. It was shocking in your last Board election campaign when groups not affiliated with retirees spent hundreds of thousands of dollars of questionable origin on your behalf. You appear to be beholden to interests other than those of the beneficiaries of CalPERS and your recent outrageous conduct confirms this to be the case.

The Board of Directors of the Retired Public Employees 'Association of California has determined that we have no alternative other than to demand your resignation from the CalPERS Board of Administration with immediate effect.

Rosemary Knox, President

Retired Public Employees 'of California

CC: Theresa Taylor, State Member Rep Vice President
Margaret Brown, All Member Rep
Rob Feckner, School Member
Fiona Ma, California State Treasurer
Lisa Middleton, Local Govt EO Gov Appointee
David Miller, All Member Rep

Stacie Olivares, Insurance Industry Rep, Governor Appointee
Eraina Ortega, Ca Dept of Human Resources, Ex Officio Member
RepJason Perez, Public Agency Member Representative
Ramon Rubalcava, Public Rep, Appointed by Senate Rules and
Speaker of the Assembly
Betty Yee, California State Controller, Ex Officio Member

Meet your Area Director VII - Ken Brown

As many of you have figured out by the way Ken pronounces his “R’s” and A’s, he hails from the Boston area of the country.



Ken is a multi-talented person with many skills which he developed as a teenager. He spent his time hanging out with a neighbor who had a woodshop in his basement. Ken became inspired to build things. He “took it to the max” when he became a Seabee in the Navy during the Vietnam war building block houses for villagers as well as 15 barracks and one school house. This was all done in 110° heat including rain and steam; not California weather for sure. He later was sent to the Philippine Islands for six months where he and his team continued to modify existing barracks. Due to his vast experience in the Navy, Ken was able to walk right into a Journeyman Carpenter position and, by-pass the need for an apprenticeship. Ken worked in construction for many years including large construction projects from Chico to Gilroy. Ken’s contractor skills allowed him to build homes, demo homes, and provide carpentry work. Ken’s experience in construction from the ground up made him the perfect candidate for the kind of Building Inspector one hopes to encounter. Ken became a Building Inspector and then for the last four years became a Senior Building Inspector for the City of Milpitas for 26 years, retiring in 2006.

Ken has owned property in El Dorado County since 1991 and bought their home in Pollock Pines in 2004. He now

lives in Placerville.

Ken continues to share his talents while serving on his church’s “Taking It To The Streets” projects, serving as a team leader helping people in the Community that need help with home and yard projects that they or their families are not able to physically do. Also, Ken facilitates a Grief Share class once a year for fourteen weeks.

Ken loves to travel in his 5th wheel RV; fishing, crabbing and enjoying the great outdoors. One could take a fair guess and say his greatest enjoyment comes from the relationship with two sons and four grandchildren.

Ken credits Keith Caldwell as his inspiration to join RPEA and get involved with other organizations in El Dorado County. Ken believes in RPEA and what it stands for and hopes with God’s grace that we will, as a group, be able to keep our retirement agreements that we worked so hard for.

He has been President of Chapter 082 for the past three years, as well as, Assistant Area Director for one year before becoming your current Area Director.

The Historian by Elizabeth Kostova

I have always been a fan of the historical novel and Dracula stories. Since I was looking for new novel to read, I happened upon a page titled 30 Best Historical Novels. Most listed are about WWII, a favorite subject in this genre. There were 4 or 5 that took the reader to other places. One caught my eye, *The Historian* by Elizabeth Kostova. This one is about the history and legend of Dracula. I immediately downloaded it from Amazon and spent my reading time separating fact from fiction. This caused me to do a significant amount of offline research.

The Dracula we know evolved from the popular, gothic Bram Stoker novel *Dracula* published in 1897. Stoker paints a picture of the vampire being a nobleman, having the wisdom of the ages, a creature who could change forms in a flash being a bat, a wolf, and a mist; one who could climb up and down the sides of buildings. We know him from movies many times over. The actual first in 1922 is a German silent movie titled *Nosferatu*, today considered one of the great classic horror films. The movie that popularized the figure featured the almost gruesome Bela Lugosi. Lugosi and Max Schreck from the 1922 version were outdone in 1979 by Klaus Kinski, probably the ugliest of the Draculs, in another German production titled *Nosferatu the Vampyre*, where Kinski portrays a more bat-like creature in that the large teeth were in front instead of the canine-like teeth to the sides of the mouth. Dracula entered a glam phase whereby Dracula became a more dashing, debonair figure. Louis Jordan, Frank Langella, and more recently Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt portrayed such vampires. True fans would never forget the George Hamilton comedic version “*Love at First Bite*” where the vampire dances with Susan St. James to the disco hit “*I Love the Night Life*”. Even Mel Brooks got into the act. Many books and movies based on his legend have been written, yet J.K. Rowling did not include the vampire in her seven *Harry Potter* books. She included every other European legendary mythical creature instead.

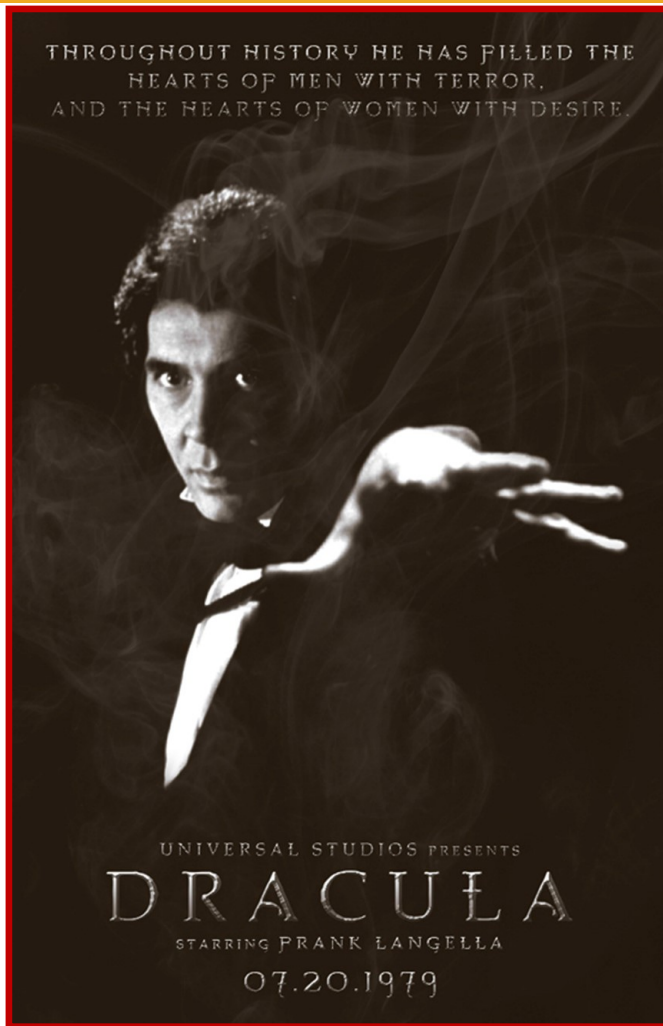
The legend of the vampire, or a creature who liberates humans of their life force, goes back to the ancient Egyptians and Babylonians. Almost every culture in the world has such a mythical legend. These beliefs exist among the superstitious, even today.

The word Dracula means dragon in the Romanian language. *Nosferatu* is the Romanian word for vampire. Today both words conjure up a dual translation with devil. It started with a Balkan prince, Vlad III or Vlad Tepes, nicknamed Vlad the Impaler or Vlad Dracula. Dracula became his nickname because he was a member of the Order of the Dragon, a fraternity established among Christian generals who's mission it was to fight the Ottoman Turks. Born in »1429, Vlad III was three times the Prince of Wallachia. He was deposed once by the Magyars from the north and twice by the Ottomans from the south. The third time was his demise. The Bram Stoker version places him in Transylvania, the region of the Carpathian mountains, second longest mountain chain



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The Historian by Elizabeth Kostova



in Europe. The Carpathians were never really conquered by marauders. The terrain and prowess of its people enabled them to ward off invaders. Vlad was Wallachian; Wallachia being the plateau region directly south of the Carpathians. Because the terrain was a plateau, it was always being invaded, especially by the Ottomans. Vlad spent a lifetime warding them off.

As a young boy and crown prince, Vlad was held captive by the Ottoman Turks. From them he learned the art of war and of torture. In war, he was one of the early appliers of germ warfare. If a soldier in his camp became ill, he would dress them up as Ottomans and send them into Ottoman camps. He eventually died on the battlefield. Many believe he was killed by the Turks. Others believe he was killed, albeit accidentally, by his own men. In either case, the Turks removed his head and brought it back to Istanbul to present to their leader, Sultan Mehmed II, and put on display. Since Vlad's time, superstitious East European citizens linked Vlad with the vampire legend and the two fused from then on. It was thought that Vlad became the Undead and existed that way for centuries. When Bram Stok-

er wrote the novel, he knew virtually nothing about Vlad. He did know the name Dracula and its implications.

In Europe the term vampire was popularized after reports of an 18th-century mass hysteria of a pre-existing folk belief that in some cases resulted in corpses being staked and people being accused of vampirism. In Victorian times, companies manufactured Vampire travel kits. The kits contained pistols with silver bullets, silver knives, receptacles for garlic, and defensive crosses. The vampire is usually considered a fictitious being. In more modern times vampire advocates may have embraced the revenant for economic purposes. In some cases, especially in small localities, beliefs are still rampant and sightings or claims of vampire attacks occur frequently.

In early 1970 local press spread rumors that a vampire haunted Highgate Cemetery in London. Amateur vampire hunters flocked in large numbers to the cemetery. Several books have been written about the case, notably by Sean Manchester, a local man who was among the first to suggest the existence of the "Highgate Vampire", and who later claimed to have exorcised and destroyed a whole nest of vampires in the area. Vampire hunting societies still exist, but they are largely formed for social reasons.

The Historian by Elizabeth Kostova

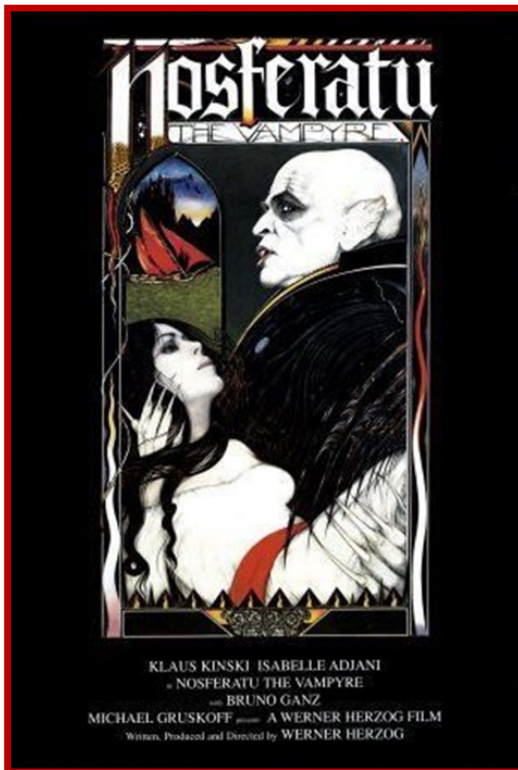
In Early folk belief in vampires has sometimes been ascribed to the ignorance of the body's process of decomposition after death and how people in pre-industrial societies tried to rationalize this, creating the figure of the vampire to explain the mysteries of death.

Porphyria, a group of blood disorders also called vampire disease, was linked with legends of vampirism in 1985 and received much media exposure, but has since been largely discredited.

Allegations of vampire attacks swept through Malawi during late 2002 and early 2003, with mobs stoning one person to death and attacking at least four others, including Governor Eric Chiwaya, based on the belief that the government was colluding with vampires. Later on, in September/October 2017, mob violence in Malawi related to a vampire scare killed about 6 people accused of being vampires.

In January 2005, rumors circulated that an attacker had bitten a number of people in Birmingham, England, fueling concerns about a vampire roaming the streets. Local police stated that no such crime had been reported and that the case appears to be an urban legend.

In 2006, a physics professor at the University of Central Florida wrote a paper arguing that it is mathematically impossible for vampires to exist, based on geometric progression. According to the paper, if the first vampire had appeared on 1 January 1600, it fed once a month which is less often than what is depicted in films and folklore, and every victim turned into a vampire, then within two and a half years the entire human population of the time would have become vampires.



I figured if Elizabeth Kostova could get me to research the history of Dracula, I decided to read another of her books: The Shadow Land. This one is an adventure that takes place in Bulgaria, a part of the world we don't often hear about. The other day I was in the market and noticed that blood oranges were on sale for \$5.00 a pound. I couldn't resist and bought a dozen.



Meet Your Fellow Member: Bob Erickson

Bob Erickson grew up in Warren, PA, a town of about 15,000 people in the northwestern Pennsylvania forest. The economy of the area was anchored by petroleum. Bob's dad worked almost all his life in the local refinery. His mom worked in the local state mental hospital from the time Bob was in junior high. Bob is the youngest of three brothers. After high school, Bob got an associate degree from a JC in Jamestown, New York about 20 miles from home. He then transferred to Penn State earning a BS in Psychology.

Almost immediately after graduation, Bob and his middle brother migrated to California. After a few months of unemployment, Bob got his first career oriented job as a welfare Social Worker for Sonoma County in September 1964. A few months later, his draft board caught up with him so he was sent off to the Army. He learned that the Army has social workers. He was appointed as a Social Work/Psychology Specialist stationed in Oahu, Hawaii. That experience convinced him to pursue a graduate degree in social work. Having gone back to school in the fall of 1968 at Fresno State, Bob met his wife, Franny, a year later. They were married in May 1970. Bob and Franny moved to Sonoma County where Bob took on a new job recognizing his new Master of Social Work degree, working with foster children. He was required to work there for 2 years because of a state stipend that helped pay for the degree, in addition to the GI bill.

On completion of that commitment, Bob became a Psychiatric Social Worker in Tulare County, with Kings View Corporation, a non-profit that did the County's mental health program. Within 14 years he assumed the position of clinical director of that program. During that time Bob got a second master's degree from Fresno State, this time in Public Administration. In December 1986, he was appointed County Mental Health Director for Lake County. Some years later, the County decided to put Public Health and Mental Health together into a combined department called Health Services and appointed Bob to direct this larger department.

Bob was appointed Behavioral Health Director for Nevada County in March 2001. This followed closely the infamous incident in which three people were shot at the mental health clinic, two fatally, and a third, also fatally, at a restaurant in Grass Valley which today houses the Lumber Jack. For the first several months of that appointment, his main concern was getting the department back to functioning following the trauma of that event. He stayed with that position for just over 5 years, retiring in early summer 2006.

After retirement, Bob served three terms on the Nevada County Grand Jury, the final one as Foreman, ending in 2010. He is currently serving as Secretary for Sierra Foothills Village, a non-profit with a mission to help seniors remain in their homes as long as they wish.

Along the way, Bob and Franny had two daughters each of which now have two or their own kids ranging in age from 18 to under 2. His elder daughter, Ingrid, lives in Lake County and works as a junior college Counselor. The younger,

Kristen, is an attorney and is Chief Counsel for the state department of Child Support. She lives in Folsom.



Bob and Franny have enjoyed international travel over the years and have visited in excess of 30 countries in the Americas, Europe, Africa and Asia. They volunteered for two months at a school in rural Kenya.

Bob is proud of the way RPEA, especially at the state level, actively defends our pensions against the constant disinformation campaigns by our critics. Locally, he is proud of and pleased by the support our chapter has shown for our Sierra College Scholarship project. As you probably recall, members have collectively donated over \$6,000 for this, all from their personal incomes. It also offers a great social connection opportunity that helps to keep life fun and meaningful.

Coronavirus Pandemic Stories

I've been quilting for a few years. It keeps my mind busy and focused. During the pandemic, I finished this quilt top and wanted to enter it in the fair, maybe next year. It's made using the 'Bargello' technique. It's not a traditional pieced Quilt, but there are 2,430 pieces in it.

I made a few of these Christmas Stockings to be filled by the members of Twin Cities Church and distributed at Christmas.

I made about 30 masks for family and friends.

I also submitted two Elks National Foundation (ENF) grant requests for the Nevada City Elks Lodge #518. Through these approved grants, the Lodge donated \$4,500 to the local food-banks and Kare Crisis Center.

I hope each and every one of you are keeping safe and sane during these challenging times.

Elsie Durgin



For 20 years I have been pursuing my interest in escape lines used during WWII by Allied airmen. In 2004, for example, I joined a two-day commemorative trek across the Pyrenees into Spain following the route taken by airmen who were helped by one of the best-known lines, the Comet Line. A few months ago I was contacted by a Belgian WWII researcher who is writing a book about Allied airmen shot down near his home town of Mol, Belgium who asked me to help him learn what became of three men who survived their B-17 being shot down in August 1943 and who evaded capture by the Germans. All three are long since deceased. Two of them had uncommon family names and I was able to locate family members fairly quickly using the tools on the Internet. The third man, Charles Bennett, the pilot, who grew up in Santa Cruz, has been more difficult to trace, requiring weeks of digging. He and his wife had no children so there were few relatives who could provide information. But recently I found two who have been helping. One is his niece, a nun in Minneapolis. The other is his wife's sister-in-law, living in Wisconsin. Bennett's career included placer mining in Alaska, operating gold mines in Mexico, building air fields for the Air Force in Morocco, working for a major engineering company in the US, and running an engine repair service for the boats of visiting tourists at an island resort off the coast of British Honduras.

Bruce Bolinger

Charles Bennett is in the front row, second from the left, in the photo.



Chapter 078 Notes:

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE:

Our local chapter has a Sunshine Committee. The purpose of this team is to respond to news of illnesses or deaths among our members. Carol Jordan is the chair. If you know of anyone that should be sent a get well card or of any family that should be sent a sympathy card, please get in touch with Carol. Carol can be reached by emailing rpea.chapter.78@gmail.com or call 530-470-0575.

EMAIL ADDRESSES:

Would you like to receive this newsletter in living color? We mail fewer than we email and those with email get to see the better looking chronicle. If you would like to join this group send us an email at rpea.chapter.78@gmail.com. That way we can collect your email address and save money and time sending the semiannual newsletter to you. You will enjoy it a lot more that way.

Newsletter Articles Wanted! Share with us what you've been doing, your thoughts or reflections on retirement, any positive stories that might be of interest to our Chapter. Write for our newsletter. To get you started...

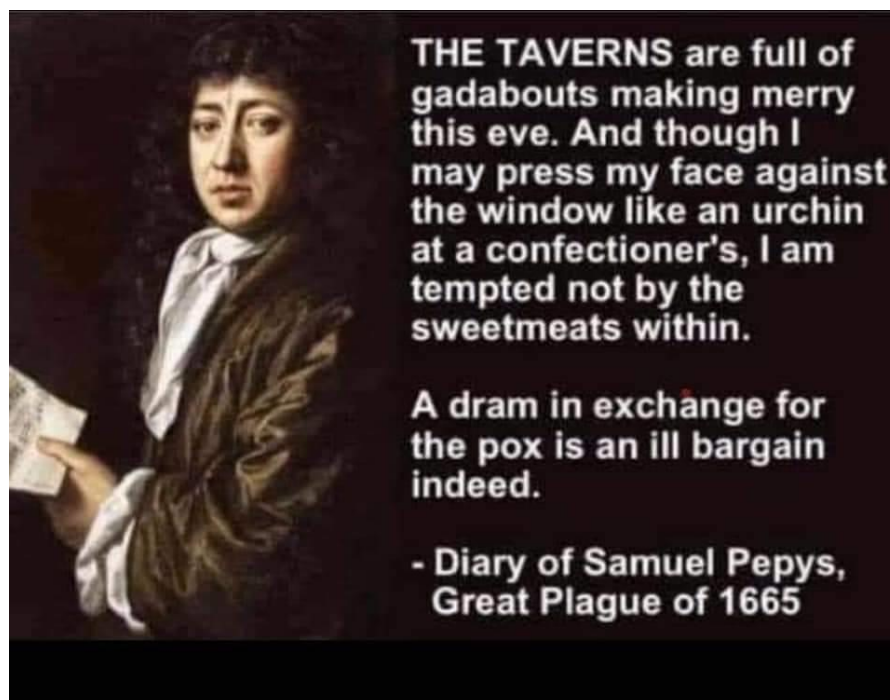
- 📖 Have you taken any interesting trips, foreign or domestic?
- 📖 How about hobbies...do you like to garden, Zumba, sing, write poems, fish, sail, practice yoga?
- 📖 Have you joined a club or organization that could be of interest to the rest of us?
- 📖 Have you participated/volunteered in a special event?

We have much in common. Just send us a letter or an email to the addresses on the next page and we can publish it in the next Newsletter.

Scholarship Account number, 210179.

The Sierra College Foundation's mailing address is 5100 Sierra College Blvd., Rocklin, CA 95677.

Thank you so much for your interest in contributing to Chapter 78's Scholarship.



Address: P.O. Box 2086, Grass Valley, CA 95945

Email: rpea.chapter.78@gmail.com

Board of Directors

Evelyn Naake	President	470-9141	evienaake@att.net
Kitty Vaars	Vice President	802-5063	kittyvaars@bellsouth.net
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Mary Ann Trygg	Secretary	263-9845	maryann80trygg@yahoo.com
Stephanie Wagner	Director at Large	273-2738	steph@sierraoe.com
Bob Erickson	Director at Large	205-9751	titoerickson@hotmail.com
Paul Lastufka	Past President	277-1701	plastufka@yahoo.com

Appointed Committee Chairs

Membership:	Paul Lastufka	277-1701	plastufka@yahoo.com
Scholarship:	Bob Erickson	205-9751	titoerickson@hotmail.com
Publicity:	Stephanie Wagner	273-2738	steph@sierraoe.com
Legislative Liaison:	Evelyn Naake	470-9141	evienaake@att.net
Reservations:	Tess Andrews	470-0322	tess1188@gmail.com
Welfare/Sunshine:	Carol Jordan	470-0575	

Other Appointments:

Newsletter Editor:	Louise Jones	265-3811	dreamtime@nccn.net
Sargeant-at-Arms:			

Our File Cabinet has moved to Google Drive. Visit our Chapter 078 File Cabinet at its new location:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1hrletvx0GsyJ76dVa9zqn3cVDvipP_uF



Chapter 078 By-Laws



Chapter 078 History



Minutes—Board Meetings



Minutes—Member Meetings



Newsletters



Scholarship Fund

Local Chapter Luncheon and

Meeting

Monday, April 13th at Noon

Trolley Junction

400 Railroad Avenue

Nevada City, CA 95959

(530) 265-5824

CANCELLED

UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Retired Public Employees' Association
P. O. Box 2086
Grass Valley, CA 95945

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

