

# At Your Service

April 2018

Orange County Employees Retirement System

Quarterly Newsletter

## Board of Retirement Approves 3% COLA

OCERS offers a Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) of up to 3% per year based upon the increase or decrease in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). OCERS' consulting actuary determines the annual increase or decrease in the CPI, derived from the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for the Los Angeles, Orange and Riverside County areas.

The COLA, if approved, is effective April 1st for all eligible payees and will be included in monthly retirement allowances beginning with the May 1st payment.

At its regular meeting held on February 13, 2018, the Board of Retirement unanimously approved a 3% COLA based on the calculated 2.79% increase in inflation associated to goods and services in the 2017 calendar year compared to 2016.

Those interested in learning more about the annual COLA have several resources available on OCERS' website. There is a short video titled Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and "COLA Bank" that can be viewed on the Video Library page. In addition there is a COLA Information page located in the Retired Members section that has a wealth of information.



### ACTIVE MEMBERS

Did you know that you help fund your future retiree COLAs through your member contributions? When the actuary calculates member contribution rates, a portion of those rates includes the anticipation of future COLAs.

## At Your Service



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### Board of Retirement Meetings:

All regular business meetings are held in the OCERS Board Room at 9:00 a.m. (unless otherwise specified)

May 14, 2018

June 18, 2018

July 16, 2018

August 20, 2018

October 15, 2018

November 19, 2018

December 17, 2018

Agendas can be found at [www.ocers.org](http://www.ocers.org).

This newsletter is intended to provide you with general information. It does not constitute legal advice, and OCERS cannot provide legal advice to members. If there are any discrepancies between the information in this newsletter and the law, the law will prevail. Should you have legal questions, you are advised to consult an attorney.

## Safety Member Election Details Announced

The terms of the 7th Safety Member and 10th Alternate Safety Member who serve on OCERS' Board of Retirement end on June 30, 2018. Elections for these two seats will be held in May. The two candidates are Deputy Sheriff Roger Hilton of the Sheriff-Coroner Department (currently serving in the 7th Safety Member seat) and Fire Apparatus Engineer Jeremy Vallone, who began his career as a firefighter with the Orange County Fire Authority in 2004.

The Orange County Registrar of Voters is currently conducting the election. The nomination period was held February 26 – March 16, 2018. Ballots were mailed out beginning April 6, 2018. The election itself will be held on May 15, 2018. After the Registrar of Voters' Office tallies the votes, the Board of Supervisors is expected to certify the election later that month.



The two members who take office on July 1, 2018 will hold their seats for a three-year term that ends on June 30, 2021.

OCERS is administered by the Board of Retirement, a group of ten trustees bound by the County Employees' Retirement Law of 1937. Of the ten members, four are appointed by the County Board of Supervisors; four (including the Safety Member and Alternate Safety Member) are elected by OCERS' active membership. One is elected by the retired membership. The County Treasurer serves as an ex-officio member. Board members serve three-year terms, with the exception of the County Treasurer, who serves during his or her tenure in office. For more information on the Board of Retirement, please visit OCERS' website.

# Make Every Moment Of Your Retirement Count

OCERS' staff meet with hundreds of members moving into retirement every year, and one of the key things often heard is that while members may be financially ready for retirement many have not completely considered the emotional consequences of retirement.

Catherine Fairley, OCERS' Director of Member Services, noted that having a sense of purpose and fulfillment after leaving the workplace is among the top emotional issues facing members when they retire.

There are a myriad of things members can discover in retirement, including spending more time with family members and friends, volunteering for a favorite charity, pursuing a new hobby or traveling to new places.

Sara Ruckle Harms worked for the County of Orange for 32 years before retiring in 2008. She recently shared how much she has enjoyed being a retiree over the past 10 years.

"I started planning my retirement 1-2 years before," Sara said. "I actively started seeking volunteer activities that I thought would interest me."

Sara notes she also passed that advice on to her husband, and the two now lead active and busy lives that provide the same sense of purpose they had during their working careers. Sara, who was actively involved in OCEA while working, is now busy serving other retirees as a member of the Retired Employees Association of Orange County (REAOC) Board.



"Really, before you retire, be introspective about what interests you. The end result is you start to meet new people and are satisfied by being part of a team," Sara said.

One point that Sara and many other retirees have shared with OCERS' staff is early planning to fill the void of not going to work everyday is as important as attending Pre-Retirement Sessions, securing any Social Security and Medicare benefits, and taking care of other technical requirements related to setting up your retirement.

"Think about the things you couldn't do while you were working; find and follow your passions into retirement," Catherine said. "While you are working, you have to find a work-life balance. With work gone, find what makes you happy."



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## Anna Crosson Recalls Early Days in Orange County As An OCERS Member

How times have changed.

Anna Crosson, better known by family and friends as Anne, began working as a clerk-typist for the Recorder's Office in February 1946, working in the basement of the County Courthouse in Santa Ana.

"I typed word for word all legal documents filed in the Recorder's Office – on a manual typewriter," Anne, 91, recalled during a recent interview. "We typed in the a.m. (mornings) and proof read our work in the p.m. (afternoons)."

Anne is the longest-termed member of OCERS, having gone to work for the County only a year after the establishment of OCERS in January 1945.

Anne was barely out of her teens when she began working for the County of Orange.

"I was born in Lovilia, Iowa in 1926 and I was the 11th of 12 children, and as of now I'm the last surviving member of all the children," said Anne.

"It was after the war, and I didn't think that area had much of a future for me, and I didn't like the cold winters, so I got on a train one day with one suitcase; I can't believe I did anything that nervy."

Anne said she had no more than \$20 in her purse when she arrived in Orange County.

"I need a job now. I went into a bank and he (the manager) said: 'Well, we don't have any openings.

Why don't you go over to the courthouse? I'm sure you could find a job there'. And I did, and it turned out that the banker I talked to had a sister working in the Recorder's Office and I was hired to type up the deeds and trusts – the paperwork that was filed with the Recorder's Office – verbatim on a manual typewriter."

Although today's OCERS employees know well about the power of inflation, it is still amazing to hear Anne recall wages and prices back in the late 1940s.



"We got paid by piecemeal – each document had a certain amount you got paid to type word-for-word, and we got a check once a month," Anne explained. "I think one time I thought I had really hit the jackpot; I made \$300."

"I had to pay rent and eat and buy clothes, but I managed," she said, noting she initially paid \$30 or \$40 a month to rent a room in the home of the Orange County Coroner because no apartments were available because of the number of young military families living in the area in the period following World War II.



Photos of Anne's parents are among the wonderful images that fill Anne's home.

## Anna Crosson's Rich Story (continued from page 4)

Anne was married to her husband Richard Crosson in September 1947. The couple had two children, and eventually moved to the Long Beach area.

She left her employment with the County of Orange in 1951. She withdrew her OCERS contributions because of immediate needs. Later she took a job at California State University, Long Beach.

"After I worked at the University a couple of years someone said, 'Anne, you worked in Orange County, didn't you?' I said 'Yes' and they said 'Did you know there is a reciprocal agreement now that if you took your money, you can put it (your time) back toward your retirement?'"

"Sure enough I looked into it and I paid back my money."

Because of Anne's decision to complete her "buyback," she now receives a monthly allowance from OCERS every month, just as she has for more than 35 years.

Long after Anne retired from her career in public service, she continued to stay busy



working at Van de Kamp's for five years and finally at a hospital.

"I went to work in a hospital gift shop."

Although Anne lost her husband more than 30 years ago, she is close to her two children. Wonderful photos (*including several lovely black & white images on these pages*) of children and family fill her home.

"I was widowed at 62. I don't recommend that for anybody."

Anne loves Southern California, especially the wonderful weather. She also has some surefire advice to those looking to live a long and healthy life.

"Walk. Walk. Watch your diet. Read the ingredients on what you're going to buy to eat. The sugar is a killer," she said.



## Pre-Retirement Sessions Key to Readiness

Are you thinking about retirement? Have you thought about all the key elements that are a part of your retirement planning, including calculating your retirement allowance from OCERS, signing up for Social Security and Medicare benefits, and considering how you want to take distributions of your Defined Contribution plan monies?

Your OCERS defined benefit pension is obviously an important part of the equation of preparing to meet your retirement goals, but you may have other programs to help you achieve financial security, including an optional 457 plan, Social Security and other savings. A successful retirement starts by understanding the benefits you can count on when you retire. If retirement is in your near future you should plan on attending OCERS'

Pre-Retirement Sessions which are designed to help members navigate the choices that impact employees approaching retirement.

The retirement-related sessions are designed to provide a wide-range of information and resources to help any active or deferred member take the necessary steps to make their move into retirement. All sessions will be held at OCERS, 2223 E. Wellington Avenue, Santa Ana.

The upcoming **Pre-Retirement Sessions** will be held on **Wednesdays, May 9 and 23; June 6 and 20; July 11 and 25, 2018.**

***Due to limited seating, all attendees must register to attend at [www.ocers.org](http://www.ocers.org).***

### Pre-Retirement Sessions Schedule

8 – 9:30 a.m.	Social Security and Medicare session
9:45 – 10 a.m.	Retired Employees Association of Orange County (REAOC) session
10 – 11:30 a.m.	Orange County Employees Retirement System (OCERS) session
12:30 – 1:05 p.m.	County Deferred Compensation Plan (Empower Retirement) session
1:05 – 2:30 p.m.	County of Orange Retiree Medical session

## Membership in REAOC

The Retired Employees Association of Orange County (REAOC) is a not-for-profit organization that serves former employees of OCERS' participating agencies.

The benefits of REAOC membership include access to supplemental medical, dental and other insurance programs through Pacific Group and OCEA, as well as a competitive scholarship program that annually awards children or grandchildren of REAOC members. In addition to receiving a quarterly newsletter that reports on issues important to retirees, REAOC members can attend regular luncheons that include a mix of informative guest speakers and social activities.

For more information, visit [www.reaoc.org](http://www.reaoc.org), or call 714-840-3995.

# Who Are You? OCERS Membership Categories

Sometimes it may seem like retirement has its own brand of jargon. When it comes to understanding OCERS and your retirement benefits, it is easier understanding your plan when you know the terminology.

## **ACTIVE**

Active members are currently working for OCERS-covered employers and earning retirement service credit. Active members are in Legacy or PEPRA retirement formulas, Safety or General classifications, and pay contributions every pay period.

## **DEFERRED**

Deferred members have left their contributions on deposit with OCERS and are no longer working for a participating employer. Contributions can be withdrawn at any time, unless reciprocity has been established, or the funds can remain on deposit with OCERS until the member is eligible for retirement.

## **LEGACY**

If you were an OCERS member on or before December 31, 2012 (and still are an OCERS member), you are a Legacy member. If you entered OCERS membership on or after January 1, 2013 but you have reciprocity with another public employer in California with an entry date prior to January 1, 2013, you are a Legacy member.

## **PEPRA**

If you entered OCERS membership on or after January 1, 2013, and you did not have reciprocity with another public employer in California, you are a PEPRA member.

## **SAFETY**

Safety members are or were employed in active law enforcement activities or active fire suppression duties. Some probation workers are Safety members, as well.

## **GENERAL**

General members are or were employed in all positions that aren't covered by Safety membership.

## **RETIRED**

Retired members are receiving monthly service or disability retirement benefits from OCERS.

## **BENEFICIARY**

A beneficiary is eligible to receive or is receiving a monthly continuance and/or a lump sum benefit from OCERS after the death of either an active or retired member.



For more information, visit [www.ocers.org](http://www.ocers.org).



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## OCERS Reports Strong 14.5 Percent Net Investment Return for 2017

At the Investment Committee meeting held on January 24, 2018, Chief Investment Officer Molly Murphy reported that OCERS' portfolio recorded a 1.2 percent return (net of fees) in the month of December 2017, and a 14.5 percent increase for all of 2017. She also noted that OCERS' total fund was at an all-time high of \$15.3 billion as of December 31, 2017.



That high mark for OCERS' investment portfolio came in the wake of continued short- and long-term performance.

OCERS reported a trailing three-year return of 7.5 percent as of December 31, 2017, and a 7.6 percent gain for the trailing five-year span as of December 31, 2017.

Coming up in our next issue of  
*At Your Service...*

Retirement Board Election Results