Spring 2015

Ventura County Community College District Retirees' Association

The Monitor

Mark Your Calendar

Benefits Experts to Keynote Annual Meeting on April 1

Mark your calendar for an event you can't afford to miss. The VCCCD Retirees Association has arranged for two speakers with expertise on VCCCD's benefits package to address retired (and interested active) employees at its annual meeting at Moorpark College on Wednesday, April 1, 2015.

Sharen Stanek Lowe, regional vice president of Keenan & Associates and Steve Glore, account manager at Anthem Blue Cross, will address retired (and interested active) employees on the topic, "How to Get the Most from Your Medical Benefits." The topic is subtitled, "Strategies for Maximizing Your Benefits and Minimizing Your Out-of Pocket Costs."

If you are an Anthem subscriber and frequent consumer of health care services and prescription medications, you won't want to miss this opportunity, not only to hear what Sharen and Steve have to say, but also to ask them questions about the Anthem plan or about claims issues you may have encountered.

We are very fortunate to have Sharen and Steve to keynote the annual meeting, as both have many years of experience in the employee benefits field.

Prior to joining Keenan & Associates, Sharen administered the health and welfare benefits program for active and retired employees of a large California county, where she designed, marketed and implemented public agency retirement and pension plans.

Sharen holds a bachelor's degree in Industrial Organization Psychology (with an emphasis in Human Resources) from California State University, Long Beach.

Sharen has also earned an IFEBP Certificate of Achievement in Public Plan Policy for Health Care Plans and for Employee Pensions. She has also been certified by CALAPRS in Retirement Plan Administration and is a member of both IFEBP and CALAPRS.

Steve has served Anthem Blue Cross for over 16 years and has extensive knowledge of the health insurance industry. Prior to his current assignment, he worked in Customer Service, Claims, Benefits Coding, and Grievances & Appeals.

Steve has also been an Employer Service Representative, working closely with large group employers and broker/consultants to resolve complex benefit and claims issues.

Steve is pleased to have worked with VCCCD over the past 2+ years, and he continues to have overall responsibility for the management of our Anthem plans.

The annual meeting is a great opportunity for retired VCCCD employees to refresh our knowledge regarding the details of the Anthem Blue Cross benefits package and its interaction with Medicare Parts A and B by learning from experts in the field. For example, Sharen Stanek Lowe has had considerable experience dealing with Medicare issues and can explain the Medicare options available to VCCCD retirees.

President René Rodriguez will conduct the meeting, which will run from 2:00 to 4:30 p.m. and include a hospitality break to enjoy refreshments and/or visit with friends. René will circulate an agenda package that includes the minutes from the annual meeting on March 27, 2014, prepared by Secretary Marie Soo Hoo, and the annual treasurer's report, prepared by Treasurer Patricia Gage. Both officers will give brief reports in connection with these items.

Attendees will also hear brief reports from Harry Culotta, immediate past president, Lynn Fauth, vice president, Gary Johnson, Benefits Committee chair, Don Medley, founder and Membership Committee chair, and Larry Manson, Educational Issues Committee chair.

Attendees will also be asked to nominate and vote for a president and vice president to serve the Association for the period July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2017. If you are interested in having your name placed in nomination for either of these positions, please contact any of the current officers at their e-mail addresses shown on the back page or the VCCCD Retirees Association at vcccdra@gmail.com

Attendees will also be asked to vote to approve changes to the *Bylaws of the VCCCD Retirees Association*. See the accompanying article for the details.

Please join us for the annual meeting on Wednesday, April 1, 2015, from 2:00 to 4:30 p.m. in Room 1-HSS-140 at Moorpark College. It is located on the upper campus in the Humanities/Social Science building, near the Performing Arts facility and the Music building. The nearest parking spaces are in Lot M and Lot PA. There will be ample free parking available, since the meeting will take place during Spring Break.

Bylaws Changes to be Proposed at Annual Meeting

Four proposed changes to the *Bylaws of the VCCCD Retirees Association*, consisting of two new sections and revisions to two existing sections, will be voted on by retirees who attend the annual meeting at Moorpark College on Wednesday, April 1, 2015. The proposed changes are displayed below, with new language in **boldface** and deleted language in *italics*.

Article III – Members (new proposed section)

Section 5. Employees of the District who are planning their retirement may become an associate member of the VCCCDRA. Associate members will enjoy benefits and activities of the Association, except they may not hold elective office in the Association.

Article V—Elections

Section 7. A Presidential candidate shall be elected for two years and may not be immediately re-elected, but may be elected to the office of President again after two years out of office **unless there is no candidate for President at the Annual Meeting.**

Article V—Elections

Section 9. *If an officer must resign for any reason during a term of office,* **If a vacancy exists in any office for any reason,** *the other members of* the Executive Board will appoint *a* **an Association** member to fill the position until the next election.

Article V—Elections (new proposed section)

Section 10. In the event that no President or Vice President is elected at a general election at an Annual General Meeting, and no one steps forward for such appointment by the Executive Board, this section will go into effect until elections at the

next Annual General Meeting.

A. In the absence of an elected or appointed President or Vice President, the immediate past president, or secretary, or treasurer, or Benefits Committee chair, or Educational Issues Committee chair, or Membership Committee chair, in that order (ordered by tenure of the existence of each committee), are authorized to call emergency Executive Board meetings and preside at those meetings to plan for the next Annual General Meeting.

B. The Standing Committee Chairs duly appointed by a President and approved by the Executive Board shall continue to serve by indicating, before their term expires on June 30, that they are willing to continue serving on the Executive Board until such time that a new President is elected.

What's So Interesting About Astronomy?

BY RENÉ G. RODRIGUEZ

Shortly after I retired (almost 11 years ago!), a friend gave me a book about the cosmos titled *A Short History of Nearly Everything* by Bill Bryson. More than a dozen books and several sky atlases later, I own a pair of binoculars, a pair of telescopes, I serve as secretary of the Ventura County Astronomical Society (*vcas.org*), and have learned enough to feel confident to show up and participate with other amateur astronomers at stargazing parties at schools and other public places with one of my telescopes.

So what's so interesting? Here are some highlights from my readings and experiences.

When Bryson's book was published in 2003, the age of the universe was estimated at 13.7 billion years old. The fact that we could actually nail down the age of the universe was astounding to me. A few months ago in 2014, this was revised to 13.8 billion years.

The Big Bang theory says that nothing existed before the Big Bang – NOTHING – not even space, nor time. Time cannot exist without space, and before the Big Bang, there was no space. This is far beyond interesting – it's impossible to grasp! That's puzzle number one: trying to conceive *nothingness* or "no space."

For further notions about the Big Bang theory, see Dr. Stephen Hawking's book *A Brief History of Time*. You might also be interested in seeing the movie about Stephen Hawking's life, "The Theory of Everything."

Puzzle number two: How big is the universe? If you subscribe to the Big Bang theory, then you might deduce that the radius to the edge of the universe would be the distance light travels in 13.8 billion years. However, not only is the universe 13.8 billion years old, it is also expanding at an ever-accelerating rate – not a constant rate – which means it has been expanding faster and faster. So rather than a radius of 13.8 billion light years, the radius is estimated at closer to 45 billion light years, which means that the diameter of the sphere of the universe is about 90 billion light years. At about 6 trillion miles per light year, this results in a universe that is 540 billion trillion miles across and growing!

What is remarkable to me is that science can provide, though tentative, numbers to these questions that are most likely very close to the truth.

Closer to the subject of astronomy is the subject of supernovae (the plural of supernova). Supernovae are the exploding demise of supergiant stars (about 1,000 times larger than our sun) that put out more light when they explode than all the stars in the galaxy. They are considered the biggest event in creation. And it is during the collapse and explosion of these supergiant stars that the colossally high temperatures required are generated to fuse and create the higher elements that are necessary for life. Without supernovae, human beings would not exist, which means we are all truly made of "star stuff." It is estimated that about three supernovae occur somewhere in our galaxy, the Milky Way, every 100 years.

Betelgeuse, the red supergiant star you can see in the upper left hand corner of the Orion constellation in our winter sky, is about 1 billion miles across, 500 light years away, only 10 million years old (by comparison, our sun is 4.5 billion years old), but is expected to go supernova within the next 100 million years.

Membership Report

BY DON MEDLEY

Please join me in welcoming our valued colleagues to the VCCCD Retirees Association and in wishing them a long and satisfying retirement.

Gary N. Anglin	Ventura College	Carmen Guerrero	Oxnard College
Keith Hilmer	Moorpark College	Ted O. Prell	Ventura College
Deborah Richie	Moorpark College	Danny Robison	Oxnard College
Shelley Savren	Oxnard College	Charles Wright	Moorpark College

THERE ARE MANY NEW RETIREES, AND WE DO NOT HAVE EVERYONE'S CONTACT INFORMATION!!! WE NEED ADDRESSES, TELEPHONE NUMBERS, and E-MAIL ADDRESSES FOR THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE. If you can help, please call Don Medley at 805-482-8761 or email to don.medley@verizon.net. Thank you!

Robert Anderson	Rebecca Anderson	Janet Archibald	Denise Avila
Carol Baughman	Margaret Boles	Vincent Campo	Susan Carter
Linda Chapman	Christy Corbett	Ismael de la Rocha	Sharon Davies
Will Diets	David Farris	Betty Florentine	Carmen Guerrero
Charles J. Hewson	Marjorie E Imbach	Wilmer Ingram	James Kenney
Julie Lovejoy	Carl Mahr	Steven J. Mayer	Thomas McAdam
Michael McGann	MaryAnne McNeil	Janet K Murdock	Candace Peyton Mead
Jerry Purcell	John Roach	Hart Schulz	Joan Smith
Larry D. Smithson	Diane Stephens	Carmen S Taylor	Manny Turse
Charlotte K Udd	Al Villegas	Sue Wall	Janice Wiley
Ernest Williams	Charles Wright		

Please help me with current e-mail addresses for these retirees. Messages sent to them have been returned as undeliverable.

Alberto Beron	Merri Ann Harbert	Eleanor Hudson	Ellis Jump
Jean Morgan	Henry Nevarez	Charlotte Udd	Susan Webster

Look for us on the Web at

http://www.vcccdra.org

In Memoriam

We honor the memory of our departed colleagues and extend our sincerest condolences to their families, friends, and associates.

Betty Lou Coffey
Barbara Derryberry
Dorothy M. Jantsch (Hyde)
Salvadore Sanchez Jr.

2014-2015 Executive Board

René G. Rodriguez, President	***vcccdra@gmail.com***
Harry R. Culotta, Past President	***hculotta@dslextreme.com***
Lynn Fauth, Vice President	***lynnfauth@roadrunner.com***
Marie Soo Hoo, Secretary	***masoohoo@att.net***
Patricia Gage, Treasurer	***pgage5545@roadrunner.com***
Gary Johnson, Benefits Committee Chair	***freevcnet@aol.com***
Don Medley, Membership Committee Chair	***don.medley@verizon.net***
Larry Manson, Educational Issues Comm. Chair	***lmanson@west.net***

VCCCD Retirees' Association
P.O. Box 6216
Ventura, CA 93006-6216

Place postage here