

FEBRUARY 2006 MEA NEWSLETTER

Items found on the way to finding what I was looking for:

- 1) February 13th NEWSWEEK – “In 1972, the typical 25 – 34 year old male with just a high-school diploma earned just over \$42,000, adjusted for inflation. Today the typical earnings are \$29,000. Meanwhile, the costs for all the basics--rent, child care, health care-- have all grown faster than inflation.” What is happening to the American dream?
- 2) February AARP BULLETIN – “The median assets of older adults rose in 2004 to \$48,380 from \$45,790 in 2003. But median family income dropped slightly from 2003--it hasn't kept pace with inflation since 1999. The picture was less rosy for health. The percentage of people 50-64 with insurance in 2004 dropped from 1999. And the percentage of the 50 plus group who couldn't afford medical care rose slightly from 1997.

While the specific numbers may be new to you, most of us aware of these economic trends. No wonder there are so many baby-boomers supporting both parents and children.

The two age groups cited above were major parts of the New Deal Coalition that held influence if not power from 1933 through the first election of California's own Ronald Reagan. It seems obvious that many of these voters have, knowingly or not, sacrificed economic interests to elect officials based on their views on social issues, including taxes. Without a massive education program, these voters are likely to support measures like that proposed by Assembly Member Richman to drastically cut benefits for public employees after a future fixed date. It will be a great challenge to maintain retirement and medical benefits for all government workers. Even in “liberal” San Francisco, voters may find it hard to make improvements to these plans at a time when they do not enjoy the same levels of protection.

There was a time that public employees received good medical and retirement benefits because the costs of these benefits were not expensive, and salaries for public officials were lower than those paid in the private sector. In many job categories this is no longer the case. Education programs start with individuals. You can help by discussing these issues with friends and family. Otherwise, the race to the bottom continues.

City Negotiations Begin – MEA is scheduled to have its first bargaining session with the City's team headed by DHR Director Phil Ginsburg on Wednesday, February 15th. MEA's major initial proposals call for a 4.75% salary increase for each year of the term, access to the higher salary of MCCP Range A based on time in grade, access to the higher salaries of MCCP Range B based on time in grade and competent/effective job performance as measured by annual evaluations, longevity/retention pay increases, an improved sever-ance package, cash out of unused Administrative or Executive leave. MEA is also pro-posing Acting Assignment Pay be made based on the salary of the higher position, allow-ing floating holidays to be used in hours, lifting the cap on sick leave

accrual and Night Duty Pay. Finally, MEA is proposing changes regarding probationary periods for transferred, provisional or laid off employees who choose to bump into previously held positions.

Latest City Budget News – There was a two-hour budget meeting held for all Unions on February 6th. Highlights of the presentation included the City’s budgeting to assume the 7.5% employee contribution to retirement effective July 1, 2006 as well as its share of the medical and dental premium increases. It was stated that if all programs and personnel were continued, it would cause a \$35 million General Fund deficit in FY ‘07. It was also presented that a 1% salary increase for all City employees would cost approximately \$9 million to the General Fund and more than \$18 million for all employees.

As previously reported, the budget instructions to the General Fund Departments called for departments to assume half of the employee retirement contribution. The instructions also call for “...additional departmental reductions of 3% of the General Fund subsidy and one time uses of a like amount (sic).”

Compensation increases will be negotiated or arbitrated. The effect may be another round of layoffs and/or program reductions.

HOUSING AUTHORITY NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUE – The Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) initial response to MEA’s Unfair Labor Practice (UFLP) charge was not to sustain the charge and to give MEA until February 15th to make amendments. We will do so. One of the core arguments that we believe the PERB Regional Attorney ignored was the failure of the Commission to ratify the take-away of the 7% contribution to the 401(A) plan before it was unilaterally ended by the HA Administration.

In the meantime, MEA proposed a 7% salary increase retroactive to October 1, 2005. The HA has made a new proposal to allow the cash-out of one week sick leave each half of the fiscal year if no sick leave is used by the employee during each six month cycle. Further, the HA proposed to provide an additional 40 hours of MTO this fiscal year. The additional 40 hours needs to be reported on time cards but would not be subject to approval. The proposal would allow up to 120 of MTO to be cashed out in October 2005. While this proposal could allow an extra five weeks of pay to be earned during a fiscal year, your bargaining committee did not endorse changes in Sick Leave and MTO.

RETIREMENT NEWS – Joe Driscoll, MEA’s endorsed candidate, won reelection to the San Francisco Retirement System (SFERS) Board by a vote of 7857 over Ed Walsh Jr., who received 5439 votes. Joe called the office before the votes were counted to express his thanks for MEA’s endorsement.

For those interested in retirement issues, please navigate through the SFERS City web site and find the Institutional Investor Magazine, which has a good article about your retirement system. Google to sfers publications, and then click on Institutional Investor Article (PDF).

Also, City and Court Employees should note that SFERS will host Pre-Retirement Seminars on May 24, August 10, and December 6, 2006. These are great opportunities to learn about and begin calculating for your long retirement. City employees are allowed paid time off to attend any one of these sessions (see Article III.BB of the contract). Court and Housing Authority members may use other time off provisions to attend such seminars, but they are invaluable tools in planning for retirement.

Some members are asking if Proposition F's "three plus three" early retirement program will be extended for City employees in fiscal year 2006-07. The decision is up to the Board of Supervisors. Unions will suggest and support the extension. The Supervisors will most likely vote on this issue later this spring in relation to their deliberations about next year's budget.

NEW MEMBERS:

Greg Bartow; Bart Duncan; Elaine Forbes; Gregory Kats; Miranda Leticia; Alex Mann; Cynthia Monzon; Steve Ponder; Jennifer Ngo-Chan; Terry Schwartz; Michael Wylie; Mary Ann Warren; Lawrence White

RECENT RETIREES :

Harry Parker III; Blanche Korfmacher

PLEASE NOTE

COURSE: **"The Art of Listening, The Power of 'speaking:
Sharpening Your Communication Edge**

by Dr. Terry Paulson

DATE: Tuesday March 21, 2006 (8:30 am to 4:00 pm)

LOCATION: RAMADA PLAZA HOTEL
1231 Market Street (at BART Civic Center Station)
San Francisco, CA 94103
Tel. 415-626-8000

AUDIENCE: Senior and Middle Level Managers

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: **Friday, March 17, 2006**

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In the age of empowerment, teamwork and constant change, there is no more valuable skill for leaders to develop than effective communication. In this workshop you will learn how to quickly connect with an audience, how to sell people on listening, how to keep your presentation from sounding rehearsed even when it is, and how to craft a message that gets results. You'll learn how to deal with tough audiences and how to use humor, participation and stories effectively. You won't have to speak in front of the group, but you will participate in exercises during the day that will help you make others take notice whether you are presenting new ideas to your boss, contributing to a discussion, or trying to persuade an audience to action.

FACULTY:

DR. TERRY PAULSON is a psychologist and author of the popular books, Paulson On Change, They Shoot Managers Don't They ,Making Humor Work,50 Tips for Speaking Like a Pro and Can I Have the Keys to the Car? He hosted ECI's business television series entitled, "Quality from the Human Side", and is honored to be a distinguished faculty member of the Institute for Management Studies. Since founding Paulson and Associates in Agoura Hills, California, Dr. Paulson continues to conduct practical and entertaining programs annually for companies such as IBM, 3M, Federal Reserve Bank, HBO, Honda, Johnson & Johnson, KPMG, Merck, NASA, Nintendo, SBC/Pacific Bell, Sony, Starbucks, Verizon, and hundreds of hospitals, universities, and associations. He brings knowledge, enthusiasm, and a refreshingly unique approach to every program, Business Digest has called him "the Will Rogers of management consultants." Dr. Paulson graduated with honors from UCLA and went on to receive his Ph.D. in psychology from Fuller Graduate School of Psychology in Pasadena, CA.

HOW TO ENROLL: Contact: MEA (415) 989-7244, Fax (415) 980-7077
Email: staff@sfmea.com, 870 Market St., Suite 460, San Francisco, CA 94102

PLEASE NOTE

COURSE: **"Developing A Strategic Mindset:
Reframing the Decision Process**

by Dr. F. Lee Van Horn

DATE: Thursday March 9, 2006 (8:30 am to 4:00 pm)

LOCATION: RAMADA PLAZA HOTEL
1231 Market Street (at BART Civic Center Station)
San Francisco, CA 94103
Tel. 415-626-8000

AUDIENCE: Executive and Senior Managers

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: **Friday, March 3, 2006**

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Globalization, new technologies and increased competition present stiff challenges in today's economy. Only a new style of leadership can meet those challenges. This one-day program will help executives and managers develop the leadership skills required to survive in today's marketplace. Through a series of case studies and hand-on exercises, Dr. Van Horn will sharpen your decision-making skills and help you to become the leader your company needs you to be.

FACULTY:

DR. F. LEE VAN HORN is the Founder and CEO of The Palomar Consulting Group, which has been in existence since 1975. Palomar is an international, strategic management services firm which has served clients in the oil, gas, aviation, chemical, finance, consumer products and technology industries. Prior to founding Palomar, Dr. Van Horn was an executive with Shell International Petroleum Company in London, England. He has practiced academically at many leading universities and is a Life Fellow in Applied Behavioral Science at UCLA and is a Great Plains Energy Distinguished Fellow of Henry Bloch School of Business and Public Administration, The University of Missouri at Kansas City. Dr. Van Horn holds a Ph.D. in organizational behavior from the School of Management, Case Western Reserve University and a post-graduate diploma in psychotherapy from the Gestalt Institute, Cleveland, Ohio.

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