

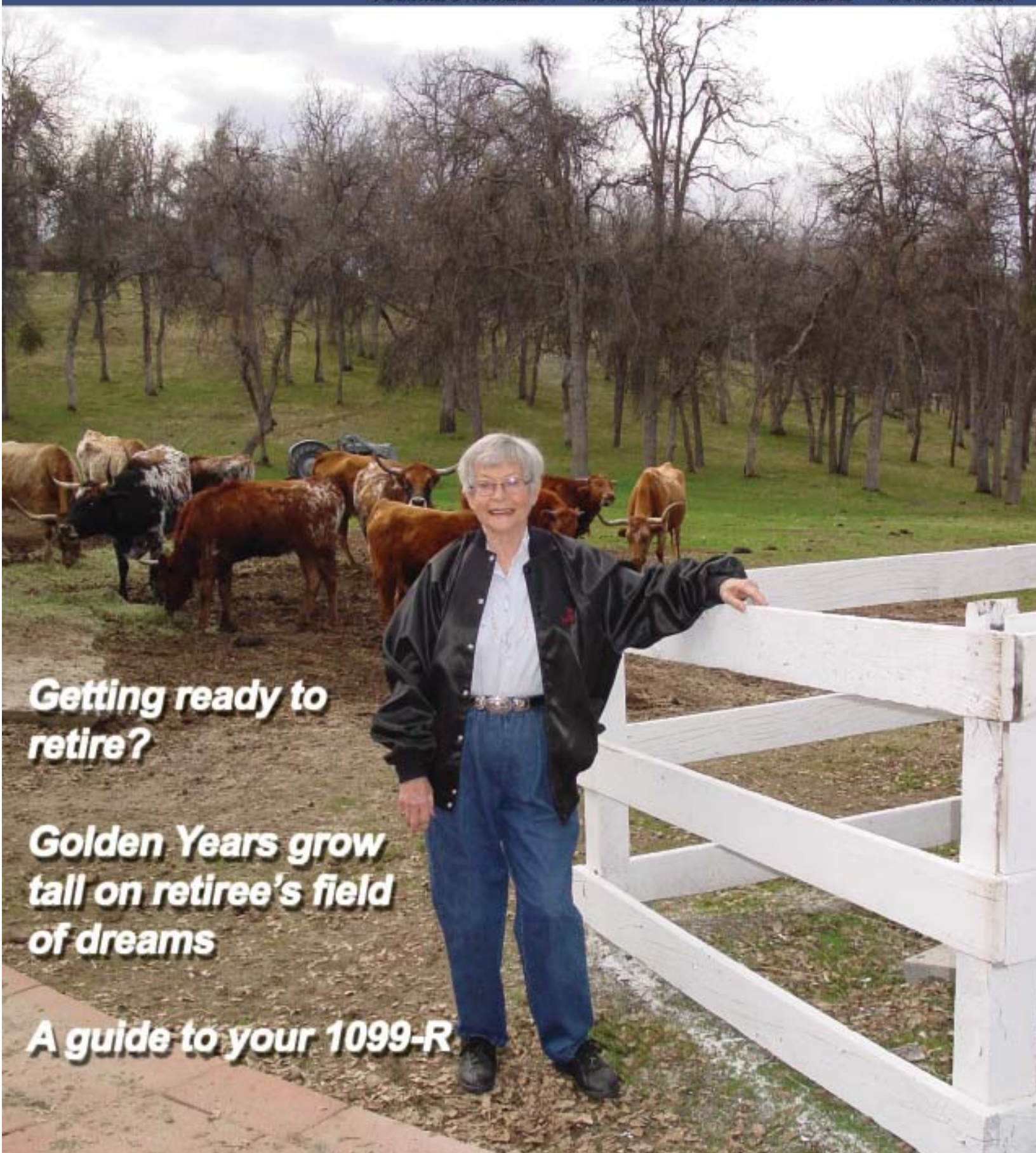
# At Your Service

Orange County Employees Retirement System

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 1

MAGAZINE FOR ALL MEMBERS

JANUARY 2004



**Getting ready to retire?**

**Golden Years grow tall on retiree's field of dreams**

**A guide to your 1099-R**

At Your Service



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At Your Service is published for members and retirees of the Orange County Employees Retirement System.

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At Your Service is written and designed by Robert Kinsler, Jayne Ritchey and Cuong Nguyen.

#### Board of Retirement Meetings:

All regular business meetings are held in OCERS Board Room at 8:30 a.m.

January 20, 2004	May 17, 2004
February 17, 2004	June 21, 2004
March 15, 2004	July 19, 2004
April 19, 2004	August 30, 2004

## 1099-R Statements for Retirees

OCERS has sent personalized copies of Internal Revenue Service Form 1099-R to all retirees. The 1099-R form provides each retiree with detailed information on his or her pension income for the previous year. The following is an easy-to-use guide on how to read your 1099-R:

**Box 1 – Gross Distribution** This is the total amount of pension benefits paid to you by OCERS during the 2003 calendar year.

**Box 2a – Taxable Amount** This is the taxable amount of your pension. If you retired after January 1, 1993, the amount is reported, less the Safe Harbor exclusion. If you retired prior to January 1, 1993, OCERS did not calculate nor report the taxable amount because of the multiple recovery methods.

**Box 2b – Taxable Amount Not Determined** If Box 2b is checked, the taxable amount in box 2a is left blank. If you retired prior to January 1, 1993, OCERS did not calculate or report the taxable amount because of the multiple recovery methods. At the time of your retirement, you were provided the amount of your taxed contributions and the basis for determining the tax recovery.

**Box 3** – This box is left intentionally blank and is not applicable.

**Box 4 – Federal Income Tax Withheld** This box shows any federal income tax deducted from your monthly retirement checks.

**Box 5 – Employee Contributions** If there is an amount in box 5, it is *not* a deduction or an amount paid for an insurance premium. The amount in box 5 is the portion or a percentage of your contributions that were *already taxed*.

**Box 6** – This box is left intentionally blank and is not applicable.

**Box 7 – Distribution Code** IRS code identifying the distribution you received. These codes are explained on the back of the 1099-R Form.

**Boxes 8, 9a and 9b** – These three boxes are left intentionally blank and are not applicable.

**Box 10 – California State Income Tax Withheld** Any California State income tax deducted from your monthly checks is shown in this box.

**Boxes 12 through 15** – These four boxes are left intentionally blank and are not applicable.

# Summary Plan Description updated for OCERS members

OCERS has updated the official Summary Plan Description (SPD) for General and Safety Members. You should have already received your copy from your Human Resources/Personnel office; in addition, they have been posted online at [www.ocers.org](http://www.ocers.org). The information in the SPD is intended to provide a summary of the retirement, disability, death and survivor benefits available to members and their eligible beneficiaries.

The SPD covers a number of essential areas such as membership, how your retirement is calculated, reciprocity, how to purchase service credit, taxes on benefits and the types of benefit options available to members. The County Employees' Retirement Law of 1937 ('37 Act), which governs OCERS retirement benefits, is complex and detailed. As a result of the complexity of the 340-page '37 Act, OCERS has made an effort to provide you with a reader-friendly guide to your retirement benefits.

However, if there is a conflict between the information provided in the Summary Plan Description and the law, the law shall prevail. Nothing provided in the SPD should be considered a legally binding interpretation, enlargement, or amendment of the provisions that are contained in the '37 Act, bylaws of the OCERS Board of Retirement, or resolutions that have been adopted by the Board of Retirement and/or the Orange County Board of Supervisors.

If you have not received your SPD contact your Human Resources/Personnel office.



## OCERS Web site should be your first stop online

Going online? Then log on to [www.ocers.org](http://www.ocers.org) to learn more about retirement, disability, death and survivor benefits offered by OCERS to members. OCERS' official Web site provides a wealth of information and services for anyone with access to the World Wide Web. One of the most popular features at OCERS' site is the Benefits Calculator, which allows any member to get a fast estimate of their projected retirement allowance based on their current salary, age and years of service. No registration is required and it only takes a few seconds to complete the easy-to-use form.



In addition, members can now register to take any of a variety of free seminars offered by OCERS through the Web site. Other features at [www.ocers.org](http://www.ocers.org) include the monthly online newsletter OCERS Extra, a printable version of OCERS' official Power of Attorney form for those who want to designate someone to look after their retirement account if they become unable to look after their own needs, as well as a Beneficiary Change form.

# Financial Strategy Seminars help prepare for future

If you are planning to retire within the next 3 to 30 years, you should plan to attend one of the following Financial Strategies for Retirement Planning Seminars held at:

**OCERS (Training Room)  
2223 E. Wellington Avenue  
Santa Ana, CA 92701**

The Financial Strategies for Retirement Planning Seminar consists of a three-session workshop. Each meeting will cover important topics for successful planning; individuals and couples are welcome to attend. The third meeting concentrates on information from an OCERS Retirement Program Specialist.

The seminar is free and there is plenty of free on-site parking for those attending. Various topics of interest and importance will be covered over the course of the three-session workshop.

Among the important topics covered in the comprehensive three-session workshop:

- Deferred Compensation investment choices
- Tax-free and low-cost investing for profit
- How to determine retirement goals
- Investment choices to consider in the current stock market

The third meeting of each workshop focuses on information relating to OCERS, including such topics as:

- Eligibility for Retirement
- Reciprocal Benefits
- Benefit Calculations, and how to apply for your retirement benefits from OCERS

Don't miss out on this valuable information. It will help you prepare for your future. The seminars are free, but reservations are required. To make your reservation to attend this seminar, please log on at [www.ocers.org](http://www.ocers.org) and click on "Retirement Seminars."

An important note: anyone registering for the Financial Strategy Seminar should plan on attending all three sessions. For more information on upcoming Financial Strategies for Retirement Planning Seminars, please call Catie Moore at Financial Management Specialists, (714) 704-6502.

## SCHEDULED DATES:

The Financial Strategy Seminar is a three-session workshop, and persons signing up should plan on attending all three sessions of the Workshop.

### Dates are as follows:

#### Workshop

Wednesdays

January 7, 14 and 21, 2004

6-9:30 p.m.

#### Workshop

Wednesdays

February 4, 11 and 18, 2004

6-9:30 p.m.

#### Workshop

Wednesdays

March 3, 10 and 17, 2004

6-9:30 p.m.

# OCERS offers Pre-Retirement Planning Seminars

When it comes to retirement planning, it's never too early – or too late – to get started. So no matter when you plan to retire, it's important to attend a Pre-Retirement Planning Seminar offered by OCERS.

The few hours you spend at the seminar can have beneficial and long-lasting impacts on your quality of life after you retire.

The Pre-Retirement Planning Seminar is held twice a month at OCERS, 2223 E. Wellington Ave., Santa Ana, and includes a presentation by an OCERS Retirement Program Specialist.

The one-session, five-hour seminar is free and there is plenty of free on-site parking for those attending.

Various topics of interest and importance to you will be covered. A representative from "Deferred Compensation" will be addressing options for withdrawing funds from your 457 plan; a Social Security representative will discuss your Social Security benefits; a representative from Retiree Medical will discuss medical benefit options; and an OCERS Retirement Specialist will focus on your OCERS retirement plan. Among the topics covered by the OCERS representative:

- When you are eligible for retirement
- How to determine your future monthly benefit from OCERS
- How to determine OCERS-related benefits for your beneficiaries
- When should new retirees expect their first retirement check
- Reciprocal benefits for employees who have worked for two or more retirement systems
- How to schedule an appointment with an OCERS Retirement Program Specialist

Don't miss out on this valuable information. It will help you prepare for your future. The seminars are free, but reservations are required. For more information and to make your reservation to attend this seminar, please log on at [www.ocers.org](http://www.ocers.org) and click on "Retirement Seminars."

## SCHEDULED DATES:

These one-session seminars will be held from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesdays.

### Dates are as follows:

January 7, 2004

January 21, 2004

February 4, 2004

February 18, 2004

March 3, 2004

March 17, 2004

## 'Divorce and Your Retirement' Seminar dates now open

The Legal Division at OCERS offers a one-session "**Divorce and Your Retirement**" seminar on how divorce may impact your retirement benefits. It will be held on the following dates and times:

- **Thursday, February 10, 2004; 8 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.**
- **Thursday, April 13, 2004; 8 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.**



The seminar focuses on how OCERS handles divorce materials and what types of court orders comply with the retirement plan. The OCERS legal staff cannot offer legal advice on your specific rights under California community property laws.

The seminar is free and open to all members. The seminar will be held at OCERS, 2223 Wellington Ave., Santa Ana. To reserve a space go to our Web site and click on "Retirement Seminars."

## Retirement is golden for Irma Braumiller

Everyone dreams of enjoying a long and comfortable retirement, but chances are Irma Braumiller has come up with the perfect technique to make Golden Years grow out of green pastures.

Since retiring from her position with the Family Support Division of the District Attorney on March 21, 1980, she has taken flying lessons, developed her writing skills as a columnist for the local newspaper and traveled throughout Europe.

But most impressive is her daily commitment to managing a 55-acre cattle ranch in Tulare County. There are approximately 20 head of Texas Long Horn cattle at the Sierra Oaks Ranch, located adjacent to Sequoia National Monument.

The Ohio native celebrated her 86<sup>th</sup> birthday on Dec. 29, 2003.

“The first thing in the morning, I stretch and use weights. I have a set routine. Then I get dressed and go out to walk,” explained Irma.

“I walk for 45 minutes to 1 hour, including feeding the cows. I do not have high blood pressure or high cholesterol.”

And although she has diabetes, Irma sees the doctor regularly and it’s under control.

She has a daughter, Barbara, two granddaughters and five great-grandchildren.

“I’m going to be with all of them at Christmas,” said Braumiller on the eve of her holiday trip to Colorado.

“I bake all the time; I don’t eat any of it,” she mused.

“I preach diet and exercise; they are essential to having a good retirement. Try something new; don’t get in a rut. So many people sit down. There are people here 20 years younger than I that are not in as good of shape as me.”

In addition to being active in a number of area organizations, she pens “View from a Mountain Village,” a column published in the Southern Sierra Messenger newspaper. She even finds time to make it back to some of the Retired Employees Association of Orange County (REAOC) quarterly luncheons.

While she admits many retirees spend much of their day watching television, she thrives on keeping her mind and body active. “It’s beautiful country to walk; often I see deer.”



## Important notice to Retirees who are considering returning to work after retirement

After your retirement, you may work in any occupation or employment outside of OCERS-covered employment and there is no effect on your OCERS retirement benefit.

You may work for the County of Orange or any of OCERS' Plan Sponsors **without** interruption of retirement benefits as:

- An employee in a position requiring special skills or knowledge; working a maximum of 120 working days (960 hours) per fiscal year.
- A juror, election officer, field deputy for registration of voters or temporarily as a judge when assigned by the Chairman of the Judicial Council.
- A member of the OCERS Board of Retirement
- An independent contractor with a Plan Sponsor
- An elected official with the County of Orange

If you are permanently re-employed with the County of Orange/any OCERS Plan Sponsor and eligible for OCERS membership (permanent position, working at least 20 hours per week), you need to be re-instated into active OCERS membership. You must also provide medical evidence that you are not incapacitated for the job duties assigned.

Your OCERS retirement payments stop on your re-employment date. You will enter into active OCERS membership in either the current Safety formula or General Member formula. When you retire again, your retirement benefit will resume.

**Note:** Employment with the County of Orange beyond these conditions may result in cessation, reduction or re-calculation of your retirement benefit. If you retired under an Early Retirement Incentive (ERI), *it is critical that you* contact OCERS before you return to work for the County or any OCERS Plan Sponsor.

### Sharon Neebe reelected to seat on Board of Retirement

General Member Sharon L. Neebe won her bid for reelection to another term on the Board of Retirement in election results announced December 2, 2003. Ms. Neebe won another three-year term on the Board with 2,093 votes (49.6 percent). The rest of the field included Gaylan Harris (35.8 percent), John Christenson (7.6 percent), Steve Otting (4.08 percent) and Kevin J. Bass (2.71 percent).

Ms. Neebe's new Retirement Board term began Jan. 1, 2004 and will run through Dec. 31, 2006. Since 1989, Ms. Neebe has worked as a Senior Accountant Auditor in the Treasurer-Tax Collector's Accounting Division.

For more information on the Board of Retirement, visit [www.ocers.org](http://www.ocers.org).

## 'You've Got Mail' from OCERS

At Your Service and other future publications can now be delivered to you via email. Simply fill out the form below and return it to our office at: OCERS, Communications Division, 2223 E. Wellington Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92701. You can receive important information from OCERS and cut down on the amount of mail you receive at home. *Please print clearly.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email address

\_\_\_\_\_  
\*Social Security Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Daytime phone number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature



\*Please mail this form in a manner that ensures your Social Security Number is kept confidential.

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