



The Peralta Retiree

January—March 2009

Vol. 5 No. 2

<http://www.peraltaretirees.org>

From the President...

by Jerry Herman, PRO President

What Will 2009 Bring?

Happy New Year to all of you! Very few of us will look back fondly on 2008. We can only hope that 2009 will revive a failing economy and bring an end to at least some of the violence being perpetrated around the world. I am optimistic that the Obama presidency will bring better times, but the challenges that he faces are perhaps more formidable than those faced by any incoming American president. We can do our part by not expecting too much too soon and by actively getting involved in public and private efforts to rescue our society from the disasters of the past eight years.

A Very Special Event

PRO is sponsoring its first event at a jazz club on Saturday, February 14. (See detailed information on page 3.) The club is Yoshi's, one of the preeminent jazz clubs in the Bay Area, and the performers are the illustrious Pete Escovedo and Family (Pete's daughter Sheila E and his sons Juan E and Pete Michael). The Escovedo family is local, having long lived in the East Bay, but an even more singular connection is that the co-chair of PRO's Social Committee, Jay Quesada, is Pete's sister, and, of course, aunt to his children. Pete has promised a special acknowledgment to PRO on our night at Yoshi's.

You know what I want you to do: Send your reservation in today. Let's make this PRO's biggest event ever.

Setting a Precedent

PRO member Renata Polt Schmitt sued the Peralta District in small claims court and won. (See story on page 2.) The District would not reimburse her for Medicare payments because, as a Kaiser member, she refused to join the Kaiser Senior Advantage program, mandated for District Kaiser retirees since 2002.

(Continued on page 2)

Upcoming PRO Events

Valentine's Day Jazz at
Yoshi's Oakland

**Pete Escovedo Orchestra
featuring Sheila E., Juan
Escovedo and Peter
Michael Escovedo**

8 PM • Saturday, February 14

Details on page 3

**PRO All-day Excursion to
River Rock Casino
in the Anderson Valley**

Thursday, March 19

Details on page 5

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Retiree Wins Claim Against PCCD

On November 19th, I went to Alameda County Superior Court to argue my Small Claims suit against Peralta. You may recall from my earlier bulletin that I was suing for payment of my Medicare Part B premiums, which Peralta had initially promised to reimburse us for (and had done so); but they had recently decided that they would pay only to those Kaiser members who joined Senior Advantage. For reasons of my own (I'll happily discuss these with anyone who really wants to know), I chose not to join Senior Advantage, and Peralta stopped paying my Medicare B premiums. I was thus out of pocked for \$1700 and change.

The District sent Jennifer Seibert to represent it. I represented myself. Jennifer's main argument was that I was not following the rules; mine was that it wasn't fair to change the rules in the middle of the game.

A few days later, I received the court's judgment: I had won.

Bottom line: I still haven't received reimbursement from Peralta. I plan to phone them as soon as the holidays are over.

Renata Polt Schmitt

Peralta Retirees Organization

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<http://www.peraltaretirees.org>

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Volume 5 Number 2

Greenside Memoir Reveals Pleasures of France

By Rochelle Galat

Ever wonder what Peralta teachers do when they are not teaching at Peralta? "All sorts of things," I'm sure you'd say and you would undoubtedly be correct. It turns out that one Peralta faculty member, Mark Greenside, Merritt College English teacher, PFT activist and future PRO member, lives a parallel life in Brittany, France – a life that includes reflecting and writing about that life in a small Breton village of 500 people.

In his new book, *I'll Never Be French (no matter what I do)*, Mark, with fondness, humor, and a healthy ration of New Yorker angst, chronicles his adventures in everyday life in this foreign terrain. And yes, for him everyday, ordinary events are an adventure – from buying bread at the bakery or homeowner's insurance, to sharing tree disputes and meals with his neighbors – all of which he approaches with curiosity, an open heart and trust of people he does not know and can barely understand. The Breton people in turn are as mystified by him and his ways as he is of theirs. Yet they manage to communicate across language and cultural barriers and develop a friendship and deep respect.

Mark's journey begins with a former girlfriend who suggests they spend the summer in France. She makes all the arrangements and he, not speaking any French, begrudgingly finds himself on his way to Brittany for the summer. Alas, the relationship does not survive the summer but immediately upon his arrival Mark is captivated and charmed by the landscape, the town, and

(Continued on page 7)

(From the President...Continued from page 1)

PRO supported and advised Renata in her suit because we thought the District was retroactively changing the conditions of the contract under which she retired. (Senior Advantage did not even exist in 1991 when she retired.) The judge apparently agreed, awarding Renata the full amount she claimed.

Although small claims court cases do not set legal precedents, we hope the District will take this defeat as a sign that it cannot simply unilaterally change existing contract commitments to suit its purposes, and that it will act more judiciously in the future. That should be the common sense precedent derived from Renata's victory.

Celebrate Valentine's Day With PRO at



Jazz Club in Oakland

Pete Escovedo Orchestra

featuring

Sheila E., Juan Escovedo and Peter Michael Escovedo



Pete Escovedo

Legendary Percussionist Pete Escovedo is an artist who broke down the barriers between Smooth Jazz, Salsa, Latin Jazz and contemporary music. As a solo artist Pete has recorded 6 acclaimed albums on Concord Records, 1 album on EsGo Records, and 2 albums on Fantasy Records with his daughter Sheila E.

8 PM • Saturday, February 14 \$30 (Reserved Seats)

FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO DINE AT YOSHI'S RESTAURANT BEFORE THE SHOW, PRO WILL RESERVE TABLES FOR 6 PM. PLEASE SPECIFY ON THE TICKET ORDER FORM AT THE RIGHT IF YOU WANT US TO MAKE A DINNER RESERVATION FOR YOU.

The deadline for receipt of ticket orders is Friday, January 30. We cannot guarantee tickets after that date.

✂

Ticket Order For Pete Escovedo Orchestra at Yoshi's

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

No. of Tickets _____ X \$30 = _____

Dinner: Yes-Number of People _____ No

Make checks payable to PRO, and mail to PRO, PO Box 1951, El Cerrito CA 94530

Orders must be received by Friday, January 30. Detailed info about directions and parking will be mailed with the tickets.

Images From the PRO Luncheon and Annual Meeting



Lena Camaras



Eddy Chandler and Helen Bersie



Flora Isaacson, Claire Barankin Wasser and Adam David Miller



John Dahlquist, Don Hongisto and Jesse McClendon



PRO Board Members Ned Pearlstein and Remo Arancio



Dorcas Kowalski, Flora Isaacson, Bunny Moeller and Judy Merrill

Thursday, November 6, 2008

Join PRO on an Excursion to *Win* Country Sign Up For a Daytrip To



River Rock Casino is Sonoma County's 24-hour entertainment destination offering spectacular views of the Alexander Valley. Voted "Best Entertainment Venue in the North Bay" by Northbay biz readers, the 62,000 square foot facility offers 1,600 state-of-the-art slot machines, including video poker and progressives as well as 27 tables featuring Pai Gow Poker,



Three Card Poker, Texas Hold 'Em and Blackjack. The entertainment destination also provides several non-smoking gaming rooms for guests who prefer a smoke-free environment. River Rock Casino offers multiple amenities including restaurants, bars, live entertainment, the historic and contemporary Pomo Tribe art collection and Spirit gift shop.

Thursday, March 19

PRO Members who sign up for the excursion to River Rock Casino will depart from Oakland by luxury motor bus at 8:45 AM and will return at about 5 PM allowing for about 5 hours at the casino. Cost is \$25 per person with a \$20 cash coupon back. PRO needs at least 40 reservations by Friday, February 20 for this trip to occur. If we do not reach the minimum sign-up by that date the trip will be canceled and your reservation check will be returned.



Sign-Up For River Rock Casino Excursion

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

No. of Tickets _____ X \$25 = _____

Make checks payable to PRO, and mail to PRO,
PO Box 1951, El Cerrito CA 94530

Orders must be received by Friday, February 20.
Detailed info about pick-up and drop-off will be mailed after February 20.

Peralta Retiree Reflects About Obama Win

The Peralta Retiree received the following letter a day after the recent presidential election from Al Lannon, a retired faculty member from Laney's Labor Studies Program. The letter was read aloud at the November Membership Meeting. Many of those present requested that we print it in the newsletter. — Ed.

I lived in the South as a child and witnessed "White Only" and "Colored Only" segregation. I was, in 1951, on a road in South Carolina where a lynching was taking place. Like many others, now gray-haired geezers of all races, I marched and sat-in and demonstrated and was beaten and jailed for upholding the basic notion that we are all created equal, that we all deserve equal opportunity, that unjust laws must be met with nonviolent resistance.

For my generation, for the protesters and freedom riders and marchers for civil rights; for those of us who marched with Cesar Chavez chanting "Si Se Puede!:" for those of us beaten and arrested in 1968 in the same Grant Park in Chicago where tens of thousands gathered on election night to celebrate President-elect Obama's hard-won victory; for those of us who fell or were brutally cut down along the way — we did our job. We Did Our Job! Our generation, although we couldn't see it a lot of the time, although we often despaired, did the work that laid the basis for this defining moment in American history. I am proud of us. Thank you all. We did our job. Now it is up to our children and grandchildren, with our help, to do theirs.

*Albert Vetere Lannon
poet & historian*

Vote In PRO Board Election

The PRO By-Laws require that the PRO Board elect the organizations officers. The Board's decision must be ratified by a vote of the members. In addition, there are two open seats on the PRO Board each for a two-year term. Please use the ballot at the right to indicate whether or not you approve the Board's selection of officers and to vote for candidates for Board membership. Prior to choosing to enter a write-in vote, please obtain the person's agreement to serve. Ballots should be returned by Friday, January 30. If you wish your ballot to be secret, enclose it in a blank envelope.

BALLOT

Vote Yes to affirm the Board's decision; No to register disagreement:

President Jerry Herman
 Yes No

Vice President Bruce Jacobs
 Yes No

Secretary Ann Whitehead
 Yes No

Treasurer Shirley Timm
 Yes No

Vote for two candidates for membership on the PRO Board:

Linda Japzon

Ned Pearlstein

Write-in _____

Write-in _____

Mail completed ballot to PRO, PO Box 1951, El Cerrito CA 94530 by Friday, January 30.

IN MEMORIAM

The following Peralta retirees have passed away during the last months. PRO extends our deepest condolences to their families and loved ones.

**Robert Seward
Mary Carter Smith**

If you have any information about the passing or the serious illness of a Peralta retiree, please contact Bruce Jacobs at: webmaster@peraltaretirees.org or by writing to PRO, PO Box 1951, El Cerrito CA 94530.

Contribute To The Pro Scholarship Fund By Honoring Or Memorializing A Friend Or Loved One

✂

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Yes, I want to support the PRO Scholarship Fund with a contribution.
 (Please print)

In honor of: _____

On the occasion of: _____

In memory of: _____

Please send acknowledgement card to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Contributor's Name: _____

Contributor's Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Make check payable to: **The Peralta Foundation—PRO**
 Send to: PRO, PO Box 1951, El Cerrito, CA 94530

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Contributions Received for the PRO Scholarship Fund

In Memory of	Contributor
Walter M. Asato	Ida Aiko Asato
Alvina Baranco	Julia Cunningham
Gerald S. Levenson	Juanita J. Peterson
Dick Ricca	Jerri Ricca

Mary Carter Smith	Juanita J. Peterson
In Honor of	Contributor
The PRO Board for their dedication and hard work	Jerry Herman

(Greenside book *Continued from page 2)*
 most especially by the Breton people who become his neighbors and friends. Before he leaves that summer Mark agrees to purchase a house.

I must confess that I approach “life in a small village, name your country” books with a certain wariness as I find the minutiae of other’s home remodeling horror stories (don’t we all have enough of our own?) and their favorite recipes not that compelling a read. I’m happy to report that Mark steers clear of the renovation blow-by-blow and there is not a single recipe to be found in the

book. This is not to say that food and drink do not play a prominent role. They do – how could they not in a book about French life –and it all sounds scrumptious. But more notably, this book is about the people whose humanity Mark chronicles with fondness, respect, and admiration. It is this and Mark’s reflection on the impulse to change that this experience inspires in him as he attempts to bridge the two cultures and his two lives that make this book a delightful and distinctive read.

More information about Mark Greenside’s travel memoir, including links for purchasing a copy can be found at his web site:
<http://www.markgreenside.com>



It's Time To Renew Your PRO Membership for 2009

Please join PRO or renew your PRO membership for 2009 if you have not already done so. If you are not sure whether you are paid up for 2009, please check the mailing label on this newsletter to see when your membership expires.

Dues are: \$20-1 year, \$55-3 years, \$80-5 years, and \$250-lifetime.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Mail to: PRO, PO Box 1951, El Cerrito, CA 94530

***Peralta Retirees Organization
P. O. Box 1951
El Cerrito CA 94530***