



The Peralta Retiree

January-March 2013 Vol. 9 No. 2

<http://www.peraltaretirees.org>

From the President...

by Jerry Herman, PRO President

Stay Well...And I Mean It

As many of you are aware, one of the major failings of the American health care system is its traditional focus on treatment of illness and disease as opposed to the prevention of them. Over the last decade or so there has been a shift in the attention paid to prevention. More and more the medical profession and the American population have come to recognize the obvious – that it’s much better for people’s health and well-being, and much less costly besides, to prevent illness and disease than it is to treat them.

Shocking CDC Stats

I don’t want to bore you with too many statistics, but these few excerpted from a report by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/overview/index.htm>) might get your attention:

Chronic Diseases are the Leading Causes of Death and Disability in the U.S.

- 7 out of 10 deaths among Americans each year are from chronic diseases. Heart disease, cancer and stroke account for more than 50% of all deaths each year.
- In 2005, 133 million Americans – almost 1 out of every 2 adults – had at least one chronic illness.
- Obesity has become a major health concern. 1 in every 3 adults is obese and almost 1 in 5 youth between the ages of 6 and 19 is obese.
- Diabetes continues to be the leading cause of kidney failure, non-traumatic lower-extremity amputations, and blindness among adults, aged 20-74.

PRO Lunch and Theater Party

Magic Theater Presents Se Llama Cristina

Saturday ■ February 9 ■ 2:30 PM

Details on Page 5

- Excessive alcohol consumption is the third leading preventable cause of death in the U.S., behind diet and physical activity and tobacco.

Four modifiable health risk behaviors—lack of physical activity, poor nutrition, tobacco use, and excessive alcohol consumption—are responsible for much of the illness, suffering, and early deaths related to chronic diseases.

- More than one-third of all adults do not meet recommendations for aerobic physical activity based on the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, and 23% report no leisure-time physical activity at all in the preceding month.
- In 2007, less than 22% of high school students and only 24% of adults reported eating 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day.

(Continued on page 2)

Inside This Issue . . .

Brain Fitness	p. 3
Annual Meeting	P. 4
Theater Party & Lunch	P. 5
Benefits Committee	P. 6
Court Ruling	P. 6

PRO T-Shirts Available



You can order a PRO T-Shirt. Shirts are turquoise, 100% cotton and available in S, M, L and XL sizes. \$20 per shirt

To Order: Mail a check made out to "PRO" for \$20 for each shirt. Designate the size(s) you want and include your name and a mailing address. Send your check to PRO, 1250-I Newell Ave., #162, Walnut Creek, CA 94596

Welcome New Members

PRO welcomes the following retirees who have recently joined.

Pat Coven

Adrienne Riley

Bonnie Paull

Joseph Williams

Peralta Retirees Organization

1250-I Newell Ave., #162
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

<http://www.peraltaretirees.org>

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Volume 9 Number 2

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

- Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death, and cigarette smoking causes almost all cases. Smoking causes about 90% of lung cancer deaths in men and almost 80% in women.
- Excessive alcohol consumption contributes to over 54 different diseases and injuries, including cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, liver, colon, and breast, liver diseases, and other cardiovascular, neurological, psychiatric, and gastrointestinal health problems.

PRO's Wellness Project

This spring PRO, too, will begin its own wellness project. We don't have all the worked out yet, but we'll communicate specifics details to you as they are confirmed. We do know that we'll kick off the project with a luncheon presentation in late February or early March by Indra Thadani, Laney's Health Services Coordinator and Director of Peralta's Wellness Project. Indra has an MA in gerontology, and her effervescence and infectious enthusiasm make her an ideal presenter to get us started. We are hoping to have a healthful and delicious luncheon prepared by Laney's Culinary Arts Department in the newly renovated Bistro Restaurant on campus. Once we get these arrangements and dates set, we'll be sending them to you by email or postal mail if you have no email.



Indra Thadani

We'll be eager to establish wellness activities we hope you will join: walking, hiking and swimming groups; nutrition, diet and stress management classes; dance, yoga and exercise groups – and more. We want your input into what PRO should offer in its wellness project, and even more, we want you to participate in the activities. PRO wants to protect your benefits AND your health. If you need inspiration, just watch this:

http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=8LOdmka4_90

All I can say is, You should live so long. To your health!

Brain Fitness for Older Adults

By Robert McKelvie

Brain fitness or brain health is important for everyone but it becomes crucial for older adults as they age and the risks of cognitive decline and dementia increase. Brain fitness is not merely a function of one's genes; there are many things that people can do to protect their cognitive health and increase their brain fitness. Research has shown that certain activities, diets and lifestyles play major roles in producing and maintaining brain fitness. Science has discovered that the brain retains its plasticity and ability to learn new things throughout life unless disease strikes. Cognitive decline is not automatic.

Key Findings on Brain Health

The most important finding on brain health in recent years is that the human brain retains its plasticity and thus, its ability to acquire new knowledge right up to the end of life, barring catastrophic disease or trauma. This means that dramatic cognitive decline does not have to automatically happen as people age. Actions and lifestyle can make a difference in maintaining brain fitness.

Risk factors for cognitive decline include age, vascular health, and physical inactivity. Impairment of brain health ranges from simple age-related cognitive impairment (very mild) and mild cognitive impairment (more serious than simple age-related impairment) to the severe cognitive impairment of Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.

According to The Healthy Brain Initiative the components of healthy cognitive functioning include: attention, perception, language, memory, thought, judgment, executive function (the ability to plan and carry out tasks), remembered skills (such as

driving), and the ability to live a purposeful life.

Actions That Maintain Brain Fitness

Protective factors for cognitive decline include physical activity which also aids emotional well-being; preventing or controlling high blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, overweight and obesity; and preventing or stopping smoking. Other likely protective factors are a heart healthy diet, active social engagement with others, and emotional supports.

There are many actions and lifestyle changes that people can undertake to maintain or improve their brain fitness. In rough order of the easiest to the hardest, these include: reading more, sleeping more, playing games (language games, memory games, math games, card games, board games, etc.), walking more, socializing more, taking up dancing, doing puzzles, especially crossword and math puzzles, lifting weights or doing calisthenics, taking up a new sport like golf or swimming, taking college classes, on site or online, learning something new (a foreign language, for example).

Perhaps the single best thing that someone can do to maintain brain fitness is to engage in aerobic activity for at least two and a half hours per week. Moderately intense low-risk aerobic activity like brisk walking is recommended. And the more the better: five hours a week provides significantly more health benefits than two and a half hours a week.

Brain Healthy Foods

Research has shown that some foods, and especially fruits and vegetables, contain nutrients that are good for brain health and help prevent dementia. Prevention is crucial, so middle

aged and older adults should pay close attention to their diet and ensure a high intake of a variety of fruits and vegetables. Some of the best choices include: cruciferous vegetables like broccoli and cauliflower, green, leafy vegetables like spinach, blueberries, fruit juice, alcohol in limited quantities (one drink a day for women and one or two drinks a day for men, maximum), healthy fats such as fatty fish, nuts, and healthy oils like olive and canola oil.

Apparently, a low fat diet is a lot better for brain fitness than the typical American diet which includes many fattening snacks, drinks and fast food.

Be Active and Eat Sensibly for Brain Fitness

Prevention of cognitive decline and maintenance of brain fitness are crucial goals for older adults. Fortunately, there are plenty of things that people can do to increase the likelihood of sustaining good brain health until the end of their days. Four key strategies can help: increased physical activity, especially aerobic exercise, increased mental activity, increased social activity, and a low fat diet rich in fruits and vegetables. For people who are overweight or obese, losing weight is critical as they age. Also, smoking must cease.

For more info, see *The Healthy Brain Initiative: A National Public Health Road Map to Maintaining Cognitive Health* published jointly by the Centers for Disease Control and the Alzheimer's Association available at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/TheHealthyBrainInitiative.pdf>

This article can be found at:
<http://suite101.com/article/brain-fitness-for-older-adults-a232999>

Images From The 2012 PRO Luncheon



Elaine Chen-Ramirez and Remo Arancio



Jay Quesada presents Jimmy Cato with a door prize



Janet and Frank Poulos



PFT President Matt Goldstein and PRO President Jerry Herman



Myrtle Bennett and Yvonne Lawrence



Neil Dunlop and Michael Feiler



Yvonne Lewis



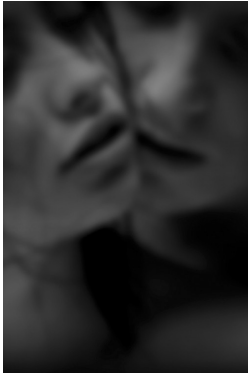
Ned Pearlstein and Michael Mills

The PRO Annual Luncheon and Membership Meeting was held on Thursday, November 8. More than 65 Peralta retirees attended. The theme was *African Safari* and many people showed up in African regalia. A troupe of dancers performed and during the business meeting current Board members whose terms expired at the end of 2012 were re-elected by acclamation (more details on page 8).

Additional photos from the event are viewable on the PRO website: <http://www.peraltaretirees.org/>

PRO LUNCH AND THEATER PARTY

San Francisco's Magic Theater presents a world premiere:



Se Llama Cristina

by Octavio Solis

Saturday, February 9

2:30 PM

Laney College Theater
Free Performance

One of the Bay Area's most cherished theatre artists, Solis presents us with a play derived from the same DNA as famed Magic playwright Sam Shepard. Enter this incredible, multi-layered fever dream where a young man and woman wake up in a strange room, and must piece together their past identities and relationship while constructing a new future and grappling with the possibility of being parents.

Before the show:

Join fellow PRO members for lunch at 12:30 PM at Oakland's nearby Cambodian restaurant

Phnom Penh House

251 8th Street

Oakland, CA 94607

\$12/person (tax and tip included)

Lunch reservation and payment required by Wednesday, January 30.

To reserve your place: Complete the form below and mail it with a check made out to "PRO" or go online to <http://peraltaretirees.org/Docs/lunmagic.htm> and pay by credit card using PayPal.

✂ Please complete and mail to:

PRO
1250-I Newell Ave., #162
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

Enclose a check for \$12 for each person attending the luncheon. Theater tickets are free.

Name _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

No. of people _____ Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Author of over 20 plays, Octavio Solis is considered by many to be one of the most prominent Latino playwrights in America. With works that both draw on and transcend the Mexican-American experience, he is a writer and director whose style defies formula, examining the darkness, magic and humor of humanity with brutal honesty and characteristic intensity. His imaginative and ever-evolving work continues to cross cultural and aesthetic boundaries, solidifying him as one of the great playwrights of our time.

Court Rules Public Pensions Must Be Paid

The following article by **Bob Egelko** is reprinted from the *SF Chronicle* of November 5, 2012:

A local government can be bound by a past commitment to pay future retirement benefits to its employees even if it says it can no longer afford them, a state appeals court ruled Friday.

The decision by the Third District Court of Appeals in Sacramento was a setback for cities and counties trying to reduce the costs of covering retirees' health care, but a victory for workers.

"Public-sector employees often give up higher wages because they're relying on the idea of future retiree benefits," said Arthur Liou, a lawyer for an electrical workers' union in Redding (Shasta County), where the case arose.

Unions in San Jose are arguing in a separate case that the city broke its promises to workers by backing an initiative measure on the June ballot that reduced their pensions.

(Continued on page 8)

Peralta District Fringe Benefits Committee Report

By *Bruce Jacobs*

The PCCD Fringe Benefits Committee is a forum in which representatives from the unions, retirees and District management discuss relevant issues, often in preparation for, or as a result of, contract negotiations. PRO has three representatives on this committee, currently Alex Pappas, Jerry Herman and Diana Lara. Bruce Jacobs acts as a backup when one of the representatives is unable to attend. Jennifer Seibert of the District's Benefits Office acts as chair of the committee.

This fall the committee has focused on the possibility of the District providing medical insurance benefits through a Joint Powers Authority (JPA). There has also been some discussion about changing from the current Anthem Blue Cross network to a new national Blue Cross network.

JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

Currently the District has independent arrangements with both of its medical benefits providers (Kaiser and CoreSource). As a result of the union negotiations concluded last spring, the District is looking at what, if any, benefits would accrue from being part of a JPA where a number of school districts purchase benefits jointly.

There are many JPA's in California, and a number of them made presentations to the committee during the fall. All have in common that the District would have to purchase its benefit packages from a menu of plan offerings determined by the JPA. None of the JPA's that made presentations offer a package that is equal to (or better than) the plans currently provided by the District. PRO representatives repeatedly reminded District representatives that the District cannot reduce benefits to retirees and that any of the policies available through the

JPA's would not meet that criterion. The JPA experts also indicated that Peralta would find it difficult to set up a separate insurance program only for retirees since reinsurance (the policy that limits the District's liability in the event that a claim exceeds a predetermined limit) would either be excessively expensive or unavailable.

None of the representatives of the various JPA's were specific regarding cost savings to the District should it join a JPA. The Benefits Committee will continue the analysis and discussion in 2013.

NEW NETWORK PROBABLE

The District may adopt a new network of medical providers for people enrolled in CoreSource. Currently, those enrolled in the District's CoreSource program use the Anthem Blue Cross network which is quite extensive in California. Recently Blue Cross companies across the country jointly established a new national network, provisionally known as the Jointly Administered Agreement (JAA). Every service provider (hospitals, doctors, labs, etc.) currently enrolled in the Anthem Blue Cross Network in California has also enrolled in the JAA Network. As a result, currently no "in-network" provider will become out-of-network if the District switches. An advantage of switching is that there will be significant cost savings to the District (reimbursement rates are lower because of planned efficiencies in processing claims) that could be as much as \$1.2 million per year. Another advantage is that retirees or dependents who live outside of California will have a much larger network of providers to choose from. If the District makes the change it will probably be effective July 1, 2013. The only change most retirees will experience is getting a new benefits card to show to their provider when they get services.

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



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, 1250-I Newell Ave., #162, Walnut Creek, CA 94596

Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by federal and state law.

Contributions Received for the PRO Scholarship Fund

In Memory of	Contributor
Loretta Hernandez	Trudi Fator
Raymond Woodward	Ralph Hohl
General Contributions	
Raymond and Betty Barnett	
Steve Schneider	

Memorial Slated for Armand Fernandez

Armand died early Sunday morning, Dec 16, peacefully, in his sleep.

A memorial gathering is planned for Saturday, January 19, at 2:00 PM in the atrium of the Unitarian Universal Church of Berkeley (which is just outside Berkeley in Kensington). The address for the church is: 1 Lawson Road, Kensington CA 94707

IN MEMORIAM

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

**Duane Beyer
Jeff Devers
Armand Fernandez
Lawrence Ward**

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, 1250-I Newell Ave., #162, Walnut Creek, CA 94596

PRO Elections Report Board Members, Officers Re-Elected

At the Annual Meeting on November 8 these PRO Board members, whose terms ended in 2012, were re-elected to two-year terms: Jerry Herman, Bruce Jacobs, Linda Japzon, Anna Pavelka-Lodato, Alex Pappas, and Debra Weintraub.

At the subsequent PRO Board meeting in December, these incumbent PRO officers were re-elected: Jerry Herman, President; Bruce Jacobs, Vice-President; Ann Whitehead, Secretary; and Anna Pavelka-Lodato, Treasurer.

(Pensions Must Be Paid...Continued from page 6)

In the Redding case, contract negotiations with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers in 2010 had deadlocked when the city imposed its final offer, funding 2 percent of retirees' health care costs for each past year of service, up to a maximum of 50 percent. Redding had funded 50 percent of all retiree health costs in contracts since 1978.

The union sued, citing language in those contracts that said the city would pay half of the health insurance costs "for each retiree in the future."

City officials argued that the language wasn't binding. They said they had an overriding duty to balance the city's budget, and cited the state labor law that allows a government agency to impose its last and best contract offer after an impasse. A Shasta County judge dismissed the union's suit, but was overruled by the appeals court.

A labor agreement can provide "vested rights" that remain in effect after the agreement expires, said Justice George Nicholson in the 3-0 ruling. He said the most reasonable interpretation of the original Redding contract was that "the benefit was promised to active employees when they retired" in future years.

The court reinstated the suit and said the union can now try to prove that Redding made a binding commitment to fund half of retirees' health costs. Lawyers for the city were unavailable for comment. View the ruling at bit.ly/ShexBo

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