



The Peralta Retiree

January—March 2014

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<http://www.peraltaretirees.org>

From the President...

by Jerry Herman, PRO President

Getting a good start to 2014

As PRO president I want to make a personal appeal to all PRO members to do the following to begin 2014:

1. Complete the Peralta online Customer Service survey (See page 2), especially the section on the Benefits Office.
2. Vote in the PRO Board election (See pages 3-4 and the election ballot insert).
3. Renew your PRO membership for 2014 if you haven't already done so (See page 4).

Doing all three will take 15-30 minutes of your time and will benefit Peralta, PRO, and you.

Let me explain the importance of each of the tasks I'm asking you to do.

Survey: Chancellor Jose Ortiz has mandated this customer satisfaction survey because he is quite serious about improving Peralta's services for all cohorts of the district. The survey will be a guide to him and the Peralta board to see where improvements can be made. The first version of the survey, which I'm asking you to complete, has only three general items for each department, but if the responses to these items show dissatisfaction with a Peralta service, a more detailed survey concerning that service will follow.

The survey asks about all Peralta's services, but the vast majority of retirees have little or no contact with the district except through the Benefits Office, so you might want to skip everything else. This survey represents the first and, perhaps, only time when retirees can let our collective voice be heard about a service that is so vital to us. Be honest and candid in your answers. Don't be silent

(Continued on page 2)

PRO Board Election

Pull-out Ballot included in the newsletter

Deadline for mailing ballots is Tuesday, January 21

Candidate Statements on pp. 3-4

PCCD Evaluating Benefits Office Service to Retirees

Online survey for retirees available now until Friday, January 17

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PeraltaRetirees>

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when there is such an easy and important opportunity for your voice to be heard.

PRO Board election. Five seats are being filled in this election, and for the first time in two years, there are more candidates than seats, specifically six candidates for the five seats, so there is an actual contest. Take a minute to read the statements of the candidates and consider your choices with care. These board members will represent you and your retiree interests for the next two years.

Renew membership: It's just a reminder. I don't have to tell you how important PRO is to protecting and maintaining our health benefits, but sometimes you forget to renew. This is just a little nudge to jog your memory. Let's hear from those who haven't yet renewed for 2014. If you're not sure whether or not you need to renew just check the label on the newsletter—it tells you when your membership expires.

May 2014 be your best year so far.

Peralta Retirees Organization

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Walnut Creek, CA 94596**

<http://www.peraltaretirees.org>

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Volume 10 Number 2

PCCD Survey Seeks Retiree Input on District Services

The Peralta District is conducting an online customer satisfaction survey as part of an evaluation of District services. PRO has been asked to solicit retiree input, particularly about the services provided by the Benefits Office. Any retiree who wants to can participate by going to:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PeraltaRetirees>

The survey, for retirees only, is available now and will continue until **Friday, January 17**. On the first screen of the survey, indicate that you are a retiree and where it asks for your position, please enter your employee status *at the time of your retirement*.

If you have had any contact with the District Benefits Office it is important that you take the survey so that the Chancellor and his staff can identify areas for improvement of services. This is an opportunity to provide input about things like responsiveness to inquiries, clarity of communications, quality of help when you have had problems with health benefits, etc. The District has promised a more detailed follow-up for areas where problems are identified.

The survey includes all District Service Centers. However, since the Benefits Office is the primary point of contact for most retirees you can limit your responses to that office only if you wish. The survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete. It is anonymous. You do not have to provide your name.

A separate survey was available to active employees during December. If you participated in that survey, you should not complete the retiree survey.

Welcome New Members

PRO welcomes the following retirees who have recently joined.

**Angelina Gandara
Alton Jelks
Nancy Koo
Kim Thoman**

PRO Board Election

The PRO Constitution and Bylaws call for an annual election of half of the Board of Governors. Governors serve a two year term. Board members elect PRO's officers each year from among the members of the Board. This year there are five open seats with six candidates competing. Candidate statements appear below. Your ballot is a separate insert in this newsletter. You may vote for up to five (5) candidates.

After you mark your ballot, please return it to PRO by US mail. If you wish to make your ballot secret, include the marked ballot in an unmarked blank envelope. Seal it and place that envelope in a second envelope with your name and return address. Otherwise, just include your ballot in an envelope that has your name and return address clearly indicated.

Ballots should be mailed to PRO, 1250-I Newell Avenue, #162 · Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

All ballots must be postmarked by Tuesday, January 21.

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

Remo Arancio

Since my participation in the establishment of the Peralta Retirees Organization and as a member of the PRO Board, I have been a constant and firm advocate for the protection of benefits due all of our Peralta Community College District's retirees. I fully support PRO's very successful student scholarship program and the promotion of retirees social programs and events. In addition, I always welcome the opportunity to assist individual retirees or their surviving spouses in resolving concerns regarding PCCD retiree policies.

I am prepared and would be pleased to continue serving you as a member of the PRO Board. Thank you.



Tom Branca

Since retiring I have had more than one opportunity to speak to our benefits with medical providers as well as to our plan administrators. I have come away with both appreciating what we have and frustrated at some of the processes especially when Medicare is involved. I would like the opportunity to try to ensure we get the best possible service with the least amount of frustration and keep the level of coverage we have come to appreciate.



Pat England

I am an incumbent member of PRO's Board, on which I have served since it's founding. I have served on the Planning Committee, the Interim Board, the Service Committee and I helped write PRO's Constitution and Bylaws. I was employed by PCCD as a Child Care Specialist for 18 years, 6 years at College of Alameda and 12 years at Merritt College, retiring December 30, 1997. I strongly believe in our mission, which calls for the protection of our health care benefits first and foremost, and also for PRO to be of service to Peralta students. As a retired member of of the classified staff, I believe the PRO Board needs to have adequate representation from former staff members. I have provided that representation up to now and would love to continue doing so for issues pertaining to all retirees as well as supporting and initiating service to Peralta students such as PRO's very successful scholarship program. I support the re-election of all the incumbents.



Yvonne Lewis

I joined the PRO Board in 2012 as chair of the Service Committee, which handles scholarship donations. I retired from Laney College in August 2008



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(**CANDIDATE STATEMENTS ...Continued from page 3**)
 after 32+ years of service in Peralta. The positions I held at retirement were Executive Assistant to the President and part-time instructor in Business. I have tremendous respect for PRO board members who are very dedicated and work diligently in carrying out their responsibilities, which include advocating for the rights of Peralta retirees. PRO Board members have an amicable working relationship. It is my desire to continue my service as a PRO Board Member.

Jay Quesada



I have been active in the Peralta Retirees Organization (PRO) from shortly after I retired. I retired after 25 years of service at College of Alameda in the Instructional Media Center. I have been active in PRO as co-chair of the Social Committee which is responsible for planning social events for PRO members, such as the annual picnic, theater parties, the Membership Luncheon, etc. I also serve as chair of the Membership Committee, contacting retirees and encouraging their participation in PRO. My main goal and reason for serving on the PRO Board is to represent the classified retirees and to keep them informed as to any changes in our benefits and rights that the District committed to when we retired. Your vote is appreciated.

Ann Whitehead



Having had the pleasure of serving on PRO's eleven-member Board since the summer of 2008, I am eager to continue my service with this highly effective organization. PRO systematically provides a continuation of retirees' relationship to Peralta where their needs/inquiries are accommodated with timely and accurate information. In addition to PRO's newsletter mailed to members quarterly, PRO maintains a well-organized, well-managed and informative website available to all. Come 2014, PRO will have provided its valuable assistance for ten years. I am particularly interested in remaining on PRO's

Board during these challenging and changing times. It is a pleasure to work with knowledgeable and helpful people and I sincerely wish to contribute any support of which I am capable.

Renewal Due for Retirees Whose Membership Expired at the End of 2013

Check the label on your Newsletter to determine when your membership expires. If the label says 2013 then you need to renew for 2014.

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

It's easier than ever to renew your membership in PRO. You can now pay your dues for 2014:

- **securely by credit card at the PRO web site.**
Just go to:
www.peraltaretirees.org/index.htm
- **by mailing your check to PRO, 1250-I Newell Avenue, #168, Walnut Creek, CA 94596**

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

Images From the 2013 PRO Luncheon



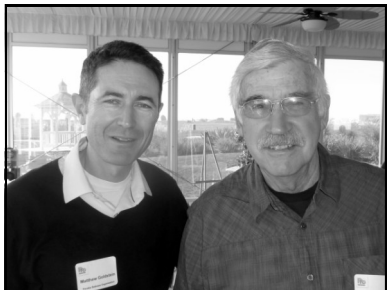
*Bunny Moeller, Ralph
Marinaro and Shirley Nedham*



*Jeanette Dorsey and Ida
Pound*



*PRO President Jerry Herman
and PRO VP Bruce Jacobs*



*PFT President Matt Goldstein
and Roger Newman*



*PRO Board Member Remo
Arancio and Ned Pearlstein*



*Rip Talavera and Victoria
Redus*



*Ponnie Rasmussen and
Adrienne Riley*



*Shirley Coaston and Myrtle
Bennett*



*Sondra Neiman and Carol
Dalessio*

The PRO Annual Luncheon and Membership Meeting was held on Thursday, November 7. More than 65 Peralta retirees attended. The theme was *The Roaring 20's* and many people showed up in period regalia. The Glen Pearson Trio supplied music and during the business meeting nominees for the open positions on the PRO Board were identified. Nominations were then closed for the PRO Board elections (more details on pages 3-4).

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

We Have Met the Enemy and She is Old

The following article is excerpted from the online magazine Nation of Change. Richard Eskow is a well-known blogger and writer, a former Wall Street executive, and an experienced consultant. He has experience in health insurance and economics, occupational health, benefits, risk management, finance, and information technology.

By Richard (RJ) Eskow

“When you are old and grey and full of sleep,” the William Butler Yeats poem begins, “And nodding by the fire ...”

Our culture has always been emotional – sentimental, even – about old age. So when did older people become The Enemy? Last week a judge ruled that Detroit could move forward with its plan to cut pensions for retired city workers. This week Washington is celebrating a budget deal that harms older people economically in several ways.

And a society that grows teary-eyed with each new viewing of On Golden Pond seems okay with that.

In a December 5 opinion, a U.S. bankruptcy judge ruled that Detroit could go forward with its plans to cut city workers’ pensions. He did so despite a state law making such cuts illegal, and despite his observation that Kevyn Orr, Detroit’s unelected city manager, “did mislead the public about the status of pensions in bankruptcy.”

Detroit’s manufacturing industry was outsourced, with no thought given to preserving our industrial heartland – or, for that matter, to preserving its covenant with working people. Wall Street banks were hired to manage Detroit’s pension money, and large sums vanished from the fund. Bankers may be asked to compromise on outstanding fees as part of a pension deal, but they won’t be asked to account for the missing money – and they’ve already been paid millions.

“Detroit ruling opens door to pen-

sion cuts across the nation,” said a headline in the Los Angeles Times. That’s the point. Pro-corporate politicians have been planning to break pension agreements all across the country, and they’ve been looking to Detroit for a green light.

And yesterday it was announced that Rep. Paul Ryan and Sen. Patty Murray had reached a “bipartisan” budget deal that singles out older people in at least three different ways: by requiring new Federal workers to pay more for their pension, by reducing pensions for military personnel who retire before the age of 62, and by cutting Medicare provider reimbursements (which will make it harder for seniors to find participating doctors).

The budget deal “opens doors,” too. Its “cost-of-living” cuts to military pensions resemble the benefit cuts our “bipartisan” leaders have been trying to impose on Social Security. Its Medicare cuts could be the first step toward shifting the excessive cost of health care to America’s seniors. And its pension changes for Federal employees suggest that the promise of financial security after a lifetime of work is null and void.

Somehow we’ve turned against older Americans. And since we’ll all join that group someday – if we live long enough – that means we’ve turned against ourselves.

In earlier, more socially responsible days – 1970 or so – the cartoonist Walt Kelly drew his Pogo characters walking through a trash-filled swamp and saying, “We have met the enemy and he is us.” Kelly’s line, which was turned into a poster, emphasized our collective responsibility for the environment. But in today’s money-driven culture, apparently collective responsibility is for suckers – especially when those who are most responsible for a problem are underwriting most of our political leaders.

If we’re to take responsibility for our ongoing economic crisis, we

must take responsibility for our failures to rein in the individuals and institutions who created it. But it’s hard to do that when our political leaders won’t step up – and why would they? Republicans are, unequivocally, the Corporations Party. And now we have the spectacle of the Democratic Party’s presumptive 2016 nominee reportedly arguing (for a fee estimated at \$200,000 or more) that vilification of Wall Street is counterproductive.

It would be reasonable to ask Wall Street to pay the lion’s share of the cost for cleaning up problems they created through massive fraud – including municipal bid-rigging and LIBOR interest rate fraud. But you can’t ask them to pay up if you’re not allowed to criticize them. And if you can’t blame Wall Street for our problems, who can you blame?

The elderly, apparently.

Which raises the question: How, exactly, do self-interested executives, politicians, and pundits convince an entire society to turn against its elders? Here’s how: By dismissing the value of a lifetime’s work once it’s done. By calling seniors selfish if they expect their government to honor its part of a bargain they kept for half a century. By convincing frightened Americans that their financial problems were caused, not by Wall Street, but by the bus drivers on their city streets and the teachers in their children’s schools.

They do it by making older people “the Other,” the antagonists, the “greedy geezers.” They do it blaming our economic misery, not on themselves, but on municipal Detroit’s retired gardeners and security guards and police officers and firefighters and secretaries. They do it by blaming our problems on retired Green Berets, Park Rangers, and accountants, on the people who, however “old and gray and full of sleep” they may be today, once

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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
Jane Koll	Susan Chin
Jane Koll	Patricia Russ
Sheryl McQueen	Dr. Katrin Spinetta
In Honor of:	Contributor
For the PFT - friends, allies, beneficent landlord	Jerry Herman
General Contributions	
Raymond and Betty Barnett	

IN MEMORIAM

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

**Patricia Allen
Verda Avery
Helon Budge Chichester
Virginia Ackerman Porter**

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

District Health Benefits Committee Report

\$2 Million Lifetime Limit: Retirees who retired prior to July 1, 2004 are still subject to a lifetime health benefit limit of \$2 million if they enrolled in the District's CoreSource plan. All other retirees, including those enrolled in Kaiser, have no lifetime limit. The Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) eliminated lifetime limits in employer sponsored health coverage, but excepted "retiree only" plans. The District has determined that the plan covering people who retired prior to July 1, 2004 constitutes a "retiree only" plan. This is another reason why it is important for those retirees and their dependents to enroll in Medicare as soon as they are eligible. Any payment by Medicare will not count toward the limit. PRO plans to ask the District to provide all retirees and dependents who are subject to the limit with information about how much they have used.

Dependent Audit 2014: The District is planning to conduct a dependent audit early in 2014. They will

be asking all retirees to provide documentary evidence to verify the eligibility for any dependent enrolled in District health coverage. The last time the District did this was in 2010. According to the information provided by the Benefits Office, the result was that the District saved over \$800,000. The District will be using CoreSource to actually conduct the audit. You should receive the request for documentation shortly.

(Met the Enemy...Continued from page 6)

processed your paperwork and fought your wars and maintained your roads and made your life better in a thousand unseen ways every day.

They're trying to convince us to break a lifetime's promise to others, and to ourselves, by telling us: We have met the enemy and she is old.

The full article may be found at:

<http://www.nationofchange.org/we-have-met-enemy-and-she-old-1387120323>

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