



From the President...

by Jerry Herman, PRO Past President

One Last Time...

This will be my last column as PRO president ...Oooops! Technically that isn't true. I officially retired as president of PRO two months ago, but many of you don't know that since it wasn't published in old-fashioned newspapers or tweeted on new-fangled Twitter, so you're finding out about it here and now in *The Peralta Retiree*. Bruce Jacobs, PRO vice-president, is the interim president until the election of a new president will take place in December. But I think you'll indulge me if I ask for an ex-president's privilege of writing this column one last time.



I retired as president because I've served in the office for ten years – since PRO's founding – and I think ten years is enough, probably more than enough. It's time that a younger generation of retirees begins to take leadership as those of us who retired ten or more years ago are not only getting older, but we aren't as in touch with the interests of the more recent retirees as they themselves are.

Those ten years have been personally very rewarding to me as I've presided over an organization devoted to preserving our precious lifetime health benefits as well as providing social activities for PRO members, trouble-shooting for any Peralta retiree who has a question about benefits, representing Peralta retirees on the district Benefits Committee and the Retirement Board (which oversees the investments in our OPEB bonds), collaborating with Peralta's Benefits Office whenever our cooperation has been needed to benefit retirees, and opposing the district with all the resources at our command when

(Continued on page 2)



Celebrate PRO's 10th Anniversary...

Annual Membership Meeting

Wedgewood Banquet Center

**Thursday November 6
11 AM to 2:30 PM**

See Details on Page 3

Inside This Issue . . .

PCCD Board Elections p. 2

PRO's Annual Meeting P. 3

PRO Elections P. 4

From the (New) President P. 5

Picnic Photos P. 6

PCCD Board Election Update

There are two competitive elections for the Peralta District Board this November. Abel Guillen (Area 7) is not running for re-election (He is a candidate for an open seat on the Oakland City Council). Two candidates, Julina Bonilla and Richard Fuentes are vying for the seat. In Area 5, David Ralston is challenging William Riley in his bid for re-election.

The PRO Board had an opportunity to interview the two Area 7 candidates at our September meeting. We were favorably impressed with both candidates. They each expressed strong support for having the District fulfill its contractual obligations to retirees. The PFT COPE has given a dual endorsement to both candidates.

In the Area 5 race the PRO Board has not had an opportunity to interview the candidates since Ralston decided to enter the race on the last day to sign up. The PFT COPE has not yet held an endorsement

(Continued on page 8)

Peralta Retirees Organization

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

<http://www.peraltaretirees.org>

President - Bruce Jacobs
brucejacobs@gmail.com
Past President - Jerry Herman
Secretary - Ann Whitehead
Treasurer - Anna Pavelka-Lodato

Board of Directors

Remo Arancio
Tom Branca
Pat England
Linda Japzon
Alex Pappas
Yvonne Price
Jay Quesada
Debra Weintraub

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

we think our contractual rights have been violated. We have a mighty good track record in all of those areas for the last ten years.

Protecting our health benefits aside for the moment, the PRO activity I'm most proud of is our scholarship program. We annually give a \$1000 scholarship to a deserving graduating student from each of Peralta's four colleges. To date we have awarded nearly \$40,000 in scholarship money, most of it coming from PRO members' donations to the scholarship fund. Along with other PRO Board members, I have personally evaluated scholarship applications and presented the scholarships at the colleges' awards ceremonies. I can tell you that the students who have been awarded PRO scholarships have not only been academically superior, but they have been truly special people who, in many cases, have overcome staggering adversity to realize their educational dreams.

Finally, I want to express my enormous gratitude to the Peralta retirees who have served on the PRO Board during my ten-year tenure as president. They have served selflessly, generously giving of their time and talents for the benefit of all retirees. They have been great to work with. Along with the serious work we have done together, we've also had lots of fun. Not only have they been my colleagues on the board but I consider them all my friends as well.

I would be seriously remiss if I didn't declare my profound indebtedness to Bruce for all he has done for PRO and for me. Although he's officially vice-president, I've always thought of him as a co-president. He has applied his keen analytic mind, his tenacity, his willingness to work, his experience as former PFT president and chief negotiator, and his unshakeable integrity to every issue – large and small – that has come before PRO during the last decade. He edits this excellent newsletter and maintains the PRO website. When I've asked him to become PRO president, he has steadfastly refused, but the good news is that he will continue as vice-president and newsletter editor for at least another term. Thank you, Bruce, from every Peralta retiree and especially from me.

As for me, it's time for me to slowly walk off into the sunset like the old soldier who just fades away....But

(Continued on page 5)

PRO's Annual Luncheon and Membership Meeting

Celebrate PRO's 10th Anniversary Honor Retiring President Jerry Herman Thursday, November 6

Social Hour 11 AM—Noon (No Host Bar)
Buffet Luncheon and Entertainment NOON—1:30 PM (\$20/PERSON)

Short Business Meeting to Follow
Featuring Music by the Glen Pearson Trio
Door prizes and surprises

Location

**Wedgewood Banquet Center
Metropolitan Golf Links
10051 Doolittle Drive
Oakland, CA 94603**
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Driving Directions

From Sacramento: I-80 toward SF. Take I-580 East toward Alameda/San Jose/Downtown Oakland. Merge onto I-980 West toward Downtown Oakland. Merge onto I-880 South toward San Jose. Take the Hegenberger Road exit toward the Oakland Airport. Turn right on Hegenberger Road. Turn left onto Doolittle Drive (last turn before the airport entrance). Golf course is on the right.

From San Jose: I-880 North toward Oakland. Take the Davis Street exit. Turn left onto Davis Street. Turn right onto Doolittle Drive. The golf course will be on your left.

Luncheon Reservations
Required by Monday, Oct. 27.

To reserve: Send a check made out to 'PRO' for \$20 for each person in your party attending the luncheon. Mail your check to:

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

Please include the name(s) of all attendees that you are paying for. There is no charge to attend the business meeting, and it is not necessary to reserve if you do not plan to have lunch.

Name _____

Number Attending _____

Names of additional guests attending:

Total enclosed (\$20/person)
\$ _____

Questions? Call Linda Japzon at 510-483-7183

Nominations Open For Six PRO Board Seats

The PRO Board opened nominations for this year's Board election at the October 1 Board meeting. The following people, all of whom currently serve on the Board, were nominated for two-year terms.

- Tom Branca
- Bruce Jacobs
- Linda Japzon
- Alex Pappas
- Anna Pavelka-Lodato
- Debra Weintraub

Members may submit additional nominations by mailing the nominee's name to the PRO Post Office Box (1250-I Newell Ave., #162 Walnut Creek, CA 94596), or by emailing the nomination to info@peraltaretirees.org. Please make the Subject of your email "Nomination for Board." The nominator must include his/her name and should have verified that the nominee is willing to serve if elected. Nominees and nominators must be current in their payment of PRO dues (through the end of 2014). Nominations will close at the general business meeting on November 6 (see page 3 for information about the meeting).

Branca Joins PRO Board

The PRO Board has approved the appointment of Tom Branca to replace retiring president Jerry Herman as a member of the PRO Board.



Tom first came to Peralta as a data processing student at Laney College in 1970 after serving for four years in the US Navy. He graduated in 1973 and after several additional years of higher education and a Masters in Environmental Horticulture he was hired to teach at Merritt in Landscape Horticulture starting September of 1980. He chaired the department for over 25 years. Tom was elected to the Merritt College Faculty Senate in 2003 and served as its President from 2005-2010. He was appointed Dean of Math/Science 2010-2011. Tom retired in May 2012 after 32 years of service.

Renewal Due for Retirees Whose Membership Expires at the End of 2014

Check the label on your Newsletter to determine when your membership expires. If the label says 2014 then you need to renew for 2015.

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 2015:

- **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**
- **by bringing a check to PRO's Annual Meeting on November 13 (see page 3).**

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

(From the President...Continued from page 2)

wait!!!! The PRO bylaws provide for a seat on the board for the past president, so forget that walking into the sunset drivel. I'll be baaack, but someone else can wield the gavel. Thank you all for one of the best jobs I've ever had.

From the (New) President...

by Bruce Jacobs, PRO President

It is hard for me to believe that 10 years have passed since Peralta retirees began to build an organization capable of defending retirees' interests especially with regard to our contractually guaranteed lifetime medical benefits. For me it all began shortly after I retired in 2004 when I was invited to attend a meeting in the Laney Tower to discuss how best to organize a defense of those benefits. A few retirees had been warned by a District insider that there was talk at the District of abandoning the commitment to retirees. When I went to the meeting I found a group of retirees, many of whom I had known and worked with while I was an active faculty member: Jerry Herman, Juanita Peterson, Shirley "Mac" Timm, Remo Arancio, Alex Pappas and Ed Minasian. Together we pooled our skills, managed to get a list of retirees and their addresses and invited them to join our fledgling organization, the Peralta Retirees Organization, quickly nicknamed PRO. Hundreds of retirees responded, submitting dues and nominations for a governing board. The first election for the PRO Board took place and Jerry Herman was elected President. The rest is history....

Over the last ten years we have established PRO as a credible and powerful voice for retirees. We have tried to maintain a collaborative relationship with the District while at the same time being clear and adamant that we will defend retirees' contractual rights. That effort has led to our representation on both the District's Fringe Benefits Committee and the group overseeing the OPEB bonds that were designed to subsidize the cost of retiree benefits. We have spent countless hours reviewing Summary Plan Descriptions of our medical benefits to make sure that new versions do not reduce or alter benefits. The District has partnered with us to encourage all eligible retirees to enroll in Medicare. We are working with the PFT to get the District to reimburse Kaiser retirees who are subject to Medicare D fees. And we have helped doz-

ens of retirees when they have encountered problems with the District in getting the benefits to which they are entitled.

We have also made PRO the vehicle for retirees to "give back" to the District by establishing the PRO Scholarships which award \$1000 scholarships at each of the colleges each year. Those awards have made a huge difference in the lives of worthy students. They have also provided an opportunity for each of us to donate to the scholarship fund to remember former colleagues who have passed away, or to honor colleagues for their ongoing activities.

And we have been about fun too. Whether it's the annual picnic in Redwood Park, the garden party in the spring, or theater parties to see plays at group discounts, PRO has sponsored events which give retirees the opportunity to gather with old colleagues and to check-in on how and what we are doing.

The PRO newsletter, *The Peralta Retiree*, and the PRO web site (www.peraltaretirees.org), both of which I have been responsible for, have (hopefully) provided members with helpful information, clarity about developing issues with medical benefits and pensions, useful resources and internet links, a means for contacting other retirees, and occasional entertainment.

I want to personally thank Jerry Herman for his service to PRO. As President of PRO for the last 10 years he has been the "face" of PRO to the Peralta Board, the unions, and the community. He has set a tone of inclusiveness and consensus, and he has done so with both grace and wit. He has been a pleasure to work with and I look forward to his continuing contributions to PRO while he serves as our first Past President.

As you can read on page 4 we are having an election for members of the PRO Board whose terms are expiring this year. Nominations will remain open until the Annual Meeting on November 6. The first order of business for the new PRO Board will be to elect officers, including a new president, who will serve for 2015. Please plan to attend the annual meeting if you can. It is always a lot of fun to be there and we are hoping for a big turnout to say thank you to Jerry and to the many others that have made PRO the success that it is.

Scenes From the 2014 PRO Picnic



Joe Camarro, Angelita Finlayson, and Helene Maxwell



Kerry Compton and Claudette Beverly



Dan and Jane Rosen

More than 30 people attended the Annual PRO picnic which was held in Redwood Park in Oakland on Friday, August 8. The day was balmy and sunny, perfect picnic weather, and the setting, with redwood trees towering over the picnic tables, was beautiful.



Chris Hadley, Helen Bersie and Fred Schmitt



Shirley "Mac" Timm and Russell Gregory



Mike Feiler, Renata Poltschmitt and Judy Thomas



Russell Gregory, Linda Japzon, Angelita Finlayson, and Jay Quesada



Sue Chinn and Joe Camarro

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.

IN MEMORIAM

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

**John Fujii
Don Kechley
Mark Lewis
Douglas Mar
Martin Popish
Howard Poulter
Earl Robinson
John (Jack) Walsh**

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

Welcome New Member

PRO welcomes the following retiree who has recently joined.

Helene Maxwell

Contributions Received for the PRO Scholarship Fund

In Memory of:	Contributor
Joe Colisto	John Luther
Eve Wallenstein	Dan Rosen
In Honor of:	Contributor
Ron Felzer	Dan Rosen
Mark Greenside	Carole Ward Allen
Shirley Nedham	Heo Park

Thank You PRO Volunteers

*(PCCD Board Election ...
Continued from page 2)
meeting.*

Both Bonilla and Fuentes expressed hope that Peralta retirees would participate in their campaigns.

To learn more about any of these candidates, you can visit their campaign web sites:

Julina Bonilla:
www.julina4peraltatruster.com

Richard Fuentes:
www.richardfuentes.com

David Ralston:
www.dralstonforperaltabd.org

William Riley:
www.riley4trustee.com

By Bruce Jacobs

On behalf of the PRO membership there are three retirees I would like to acknowledge for their continuing contributions to PRO's work.

Richard Bidleman

For the last several years Richard has been in charge of maintaining the PRO database. From his home on the island of Hawaii, he records our new and renewing members, keeps track of membership expiration dates, enters changes in contact information, and generates the labels when we mail the PRO newsletters.

Diana Lara

Diana has been a PRO representative on the District's Fringe Benefits Committee where she tracks any changes or District initiatives that affect retirees. She also worked with Debby Weintraub and me to review the new SPD.

Mike Wirth

Mike has been one of PRO's representatives on the PCCD Retirement Board. The Board oversees the OPEB Bonds and the portfolio of investments that they generated which are designed to subsidize the cost increases in retiree health benefits.

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