



The Peralta Retiree

July — September 2015

Vol. 11 No. 4

<http://www.peraltaretirees.org>

From the President...

by Debby Weintraub, PRO President

Greetings PRO Members

As I begin to write my piece for the PRO Newsletter, I am still floating from the Warriors NBA Finals victory the other night. Their win was thrilling not just because the team plays in Oakland - my city - and not because they are amazing athletes that have dazzled me for months, but because of their commitment to “the team” and their real belief in Strength in Numbers. Strength in Numbers is their slogan and represents the philosophy that each person is integral to the team’s success and can be counted on to contribute in some way. It is a labor union slogan too and being a union gal, the team catch phrase caught my attention and heart as well because the words summarize and celebrate what it is that makes every good organization and cause triumph: everyone feeling that they play an important part. I believe the same principle- Strength in Numbers- holds true for PRO.

I can think of numerous examples in relation to PRO. Our retirement benefits are protected in part because some PRO members spend multiple hours paying close attention to what is going on, not only in Peralta, but on the state and national level as well. Recently several PRO members (Bruce Jacobs, Patricia Dudley and I) read over the most recent Summary Plan Descriptions distributed to retirees to be sure the corrections we had worked on with the district had been accurately inserted in to the new document. We continue to try and get the district to sign off on a Medicare D agreement and we will not relent until the agreement is signed. Several PRO members field numerous questions or concerns from retirees regarding our benefits - again hats off to Bruce Jacobs, Jerry

(Continued on page 2)



Come have fun at
**PRO's
 Annual
 Picnic**

**Thursday, August 20
 in Redwood Park**



Details on Page 3

Inside This Issue . . .

PRO Picnic P. 3

Retirees' New Books P. 4

2015 PRO Scholarships P. 5

New PCCD Chancellor..... P. 8

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

Herman and Alex Pappas who do the lion's share of this work. Tom Branca, a newly elected Board member, sat on a committee to select the new insurance broker for the district after PSW closed shop in December of 2014. And others contribute in different ways.

This spring we had a wonderful group of people volunteering to read student essays for the PRO Scholarship and in addition a few of those people spent more time attending the awards ceremony (Carol Delessio, Alex Pappas and Jerry Herman) to help present our scholarships. In addition, PRO Board member Yvonne Lewis Price volunteers time to help coordinate the scholarship activities with the district and The Peralta Foundation. These scholarships would not be possible without the generous donations and contributions to our scholarship fund from PRO members.

Peralta Retirees Organization

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

<http://www.peraltaretirees.org>

President - Debby Weintraub
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Vice-President—Bruce Jacobs

Secretary - Ann Whitehead

Treasurer - Anna Pavelka-Lodato

Past President - Jerry Herman

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Remo Arancio

Tom Branca

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Linda Japzon

Alex Pappas

Yvonne Lewis Price

Jay Quesada

The Peralta Retiree

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The Peralta Retiree is published four times a year by the Peralta Retirees Organization (PRO)

Volume 11 Number 4

Others generously give of their time to make sure the wonderful gatherings sponsored by PRO are delightful events and keep retirees connected, such as the recent garden party held on May 24. And, our party planners extraordinaire - Linda Japzon and Jay Quesada - will once again help ensure that the next PRO happening, our summer picnic on August 20, will be fun and well planned, too.

There are people such as Anna Pavelka-Lodato and Ann Whitehead who do tasks for which I and others would not have the patience (or skill): keeping the PRO books and taking notes of Board meetings, and without their work, the organization would not succeed.

But even for people that do not have specific responsibilities, contributions abound. Folks spend time at Board meetings helping make decisions and sharing their knowledge of how Peralta works while others volunteer to take on needed work like sending out PRO mailings (Remo Arancio and Ann Whitehead). Our strength also is found in the retirees who are paying their dues so that the newsletter can continue to be distributed, events sponsored, and whose support of PRO makes our voice stronger and more liable to be listened to when we speak.

Yet, to remain strong we have to continue to grow our membership. This is a perfect time of year to reach out to people you know who may have recently retired from Peralta and invite them to join PRO. Each retiree has knowledge and talents that can be used to benefit the group. The starting line up - to continue the basketball metaphor - the people who started PRO ten years ago - need a rest and they are eager to make room for more recent retirees to step up. Last December Jerry Herman stepped down after serving as PRO President for ten years. And if I were to give out an MVP (most valuable player) award, it would have to go to Bruce Jacobs who edits the newsletter, maintains the PRO website, chairs PRO Board meetings when I can't be there and gives workshops on retirees and Medicare in addition to always being willing and able to answer benefits questions retirees have. Clearly there is much to do, so if you have been thinking about becoming more involved, please do.

(Continued on page 6)

Join your fellow Peralta retirees for

PRO's Annual Picnic

In the Redwoods at the Huckleberry Picnic Area of Oakland's beautiful Roberts Regional Recreation Area

Thursday, August 20 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

This year's theme is



Let's Go Fishing



Come have fun with Prizes and Surprises!

PRO will supply water, soft drinks, plates, utensils, salad and dessert. Bring your picnic lunch and any other beverage of your choice.

Parking: \$5 per car
Wheelchair accessible

Driving Directions:

From Highway 13 (Warren Freeway)

Take the Joaquin Miller exit and go east, up the hill on Joaquin Miller. Turn left at Skyline Blvd. Proceed one mile to the Roberts entrance on the right.

From 580

Exit on 35th Ave. and proceed up the hill on 35th, which will eventually become Redwood Road. At the intersection of Redwood and Skyline Blvd., turn left and proceed for one mile, then right to stay on Skyline. Proceed for one mile to the entrance to Roberts on the right.

RSVP: Let us know if you're coming and how many will be in your party. Call or e-mail Social Committee Co-Chair: Linda Japzon 510-483-7183 · coolbigeyes41jdp@gmail.com



New Books By Peralta Retirees

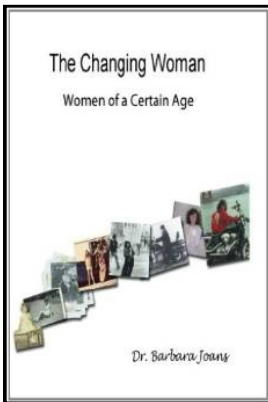
Barbara Joans

Retired Merritt anthropologist Barbara Joans has written a new book called *The Changing Woman: Women of A Certain Age* (Amazon Press). Barbara (author of *Bike Lust: Harleys, Women and American Society*), called upon her career as an anthropologist and used a personal framework to define and explore the experiences of being a woman in her 40s, 50s, 60s and beyond.



Barbara Joans

The book was the basis of a class that Barbara taught in Santa Cruz. The class called “How to Be an Old Woman in America” drew 50 students at the first meeting and more each class thereafter. The class has been over for many weeks but the women still meet in groups at each other’s homes. Barbara remains busy having just been admitted with a large scholarship to Golden Gate University’s Law School, the only entrant in her eighties.



Sonja Franeta

Dacha books has published retired Laney ESL instructor Sonja Franeta’s book entitled *My Pink Road to Russia: Tales of Amazons, Peasants and Queers*. The book presents an engaging mix of Sonja’s stories, memoir, poems, articles, and interviews. Sonja is from an immigrant Slavic family. She is also a radical lesbian.



Sonja Franeta



In the book she connects with her passion for Russia and finds out some touching as well as dangerous facts about gay people. The stories range from the seeds of a queer life planted in a high school girl on the verge of coming out, to reflections on the challenges of teaching, to an article about a Si-

berian lesbian the author interviewed who was later murdered. Sonja shares her enthusiasm for Russian poet Marina Tsvetaeva, chronicles the motivation and complexities of humanitarian trips to Kosovo and a township in South Africa, and mines her memory for unique and universal tales about her family from the former Yugoslavia.

Welcome New Members

PRO welcomes the following retirees who have recently joined.

- Carlotta Campbell
- James Cave
- Patricia Dudley
- Sonja Franeta
- David Roughton
- John Steiner

PRO Scholarship Recipients for 2015

Every year the PRO Scholarship Fund awards a \$1000 scholarship to a student at each of the Peralta colleges as part of our continuing commitment to Peralta's educational mission. The recipients are chosen jointly by the scholarship committees at each of the colleges and by volunteer members of PRO. They are always strong academic achievers who are highly motivated and who have overcome difficult obstacles to achieve their success. This year was no different.

The scholarships are announced during an award ceremony held by each college. This year a PRO member presented the award at each ceremony, met the student recipient, and had the opportunity to say a few words about PRO's mission.

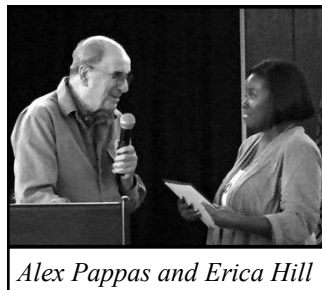
College of Alameda

Student: **Erica M. Hill**

Presenter: **Alex Pappas**

Readers: **Mark Greenside and Joe Camara**

Erica Hill is currently a double major at College of Alameda, majoring in both Apparel Design and Business Administration. She graduated this spring and she will transfer to a CSU campus where she will continue her studies hoping to obtain a BA in Business Administration.



Alex Pappas and Erica Hill

Although before coming to Peralta she had never been a high achieving student, she decided to turn that around. She has maintained a 3.56 GPA at CoA. She writes that "when others discount my abilities and tell me that I can't do something, I strive hard and continue on, to show that I am capable of doing anything I set my mind and heart to doing and achieving."

Erica started her own fashion business in 2013 and hopes to grow the business while continuing her studies. She also intends to start a non-profit organization for teen girls suffering from low self-esteem and depression.

Berkeley City College

Student: **Fernando Navarro**

Presenter: **Jerry Herman**

Readers: **Jerry Herman and Catherine Crystal**

BCC's scholarship winner was bored with school as a kid. He barely graduated high school in Mexico, disliking all his subjects but math. He immigrated to Texas, started college there, but lack of motivation and financial strain caused him to drop out. A few years of dull, dead end jobs forced him to this realization: "My approach to life was selfish, lazy, and very narrow-minded." He knew he had to turn his life around or be faced with an unfulfilling future.



Fernando Navarro and Jerry Herman

His newly found maturity transformed him into a stellar student in all his subjects but especially in his early passion, math. In two years at BCC he has maintained a 4.0 grade point average and will be attending UC-Berkeley in the fall. Though his focus is on his academic work, he has found time to be a tutor in math, to act as a Big Brother to an eleven-year-old boy from a disadvantaged background, and to be a BCC Student Ambassador coordinating tours of the college for prospective BCC students and providing them with guidance about college life.

On his own, at times he pines to be back in Mexico among family and friends. "But then I remind myself of the path I am pursuing sharing my passion and working with other math enthusiasts like me, and I regain the focus I need to keep going strong." Mostafa Ghous, BCC's Director of Campus Life and Student Activities, has called Fernando "...a great role model for our students and an asset to our college." Fernando's career goal is to be a college math professor.

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(Scholarship Recipients Continued from page 5)

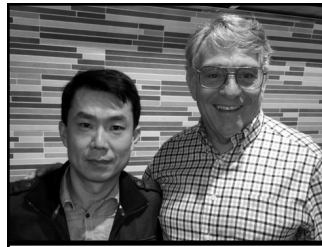
Laney College

Student: **Ryan Chiao**

Presenter: **Jerry Herman**

Readers: **Renata Polt Schmitt and Anna Pavelka-Lodato**

Ryan Chiao barely finished high school. He found himself out of work when the recession hit, and that motivated him to come to Laney. But it wasn't easy; he was scared to death and nearly walked away during registration. But he persevered even though "My first semester was hell! Every day was a struggle." He was enrolled in the Cosmetology program, completed it, and got his cosmetology license.



Ryan Chiao and Jerry Herman

But his advisors saw Ryan's potential and urged him to continue his education. Despite having to take 30 units in basic English and math, he followed through and will get his AA in accounting next year at which point he plans to transfer to a university.

Ryan does volunteer work for the Cosmetology Department and he tutors students who seek him out for help. "I find myself helping many fellow students who struggle with their studies because I want others to achieve their dreams, too, because it would make this world a better place." Helping others with their studies has inspired Ryan to aim toward community college teaching as his career.

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

One final note. As of July 31, Dr. Jose Ortiz will step down as Chancellor. We'd like to thank Dr. Ortiz for his service to Peralta over the years, not just as a Chancellor, but as an administrator at Laney College too. Many will miss his big smile, commitment to social justice, and spirit. We welcome the incoming Chancellor, Dr. Jowell C.

Merritt College

Student: **William Daniel Easley**

Presenter: **Carol Dalessio**

Readers: **Yvonne Lewis Price and Carol Dalessio**

William Daniel Easley grew up in an abusive home where his father was an alcoholic. He was regularly beaten and was often deprived of food. Although he showed an early talent in art he was not able to attend art school and responded by losing interest in his education. After graduating from high school William enlisted in the Marine Corps. In the Corps he had an opportunity to travel and to get away from the difficult environment at home.



Carol Dalessio and William Daniel Easley

In the Marines, William served as a military police officer. The Corps fostered the development of William's leadership skills, and when he was discharged he started working for a variety of civilian police forces including the Department of Defense police where he became an instructor teaching defensive tactics.

He started attending Merritt in the spring of 2013, excelling in all his classes and has been nominated for the International Student Laureate Program. If he is accepted he will travel to South Africa or China to study. He plans to continue studying to get a BA in Administration of Justice.

Laguerre, and we look forward to working with him during his tenure with Peralta. He will soon discover that we have a vibrant retiree organization that stays engaged in the life of Peralta. He will learn about our communication with Board members and others throughout the district, he will find us volunteering at events, serving on committees or working part time somewhere in Peralta. He will learn that PRO has strength in numbers.

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
Peter Jowise	Thomas R. Hughes
Peter Jowise	Juanita Peterson
Donald Dye	Betty Rhoades
Smokey Wilson	Juanita Peterson
Smokey Wilson	Bruce Jacobs

IN MEMORIAM

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

**William Box
David Lauer
Eugene Osegueda
Cynthia Whitfield**

If you have any information about the passing or the serious illness of a Peralta retiree, please contact Bruce Jacobs at: brucejjacobs@gmail.com or by writing to PRO, 1250-I Newell Ave., #162, Walnut Creek, CA 94596

PCCD Board Selects Jowel Laguerre to Serve as Chancellor



The Peralta Board appointed Dr. Jowel C. Laguerre, a native of Haiti, to the position of Chancellor of the District. Dr. Laguerre holds a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership for college and university administration, a Master's of Science in Education in School Administration and a Master's of Arts in French Lit-

erature from the University of Kansas, and a B.A. in Mathematics and Physics Education from L'Université d'Etat d'Haiti: Ecole Normale Supérieure, Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Prior to joining Peralta, he served as Chancellor of the Solano CCD. Before Solano Dr Laguerre served as a VP at community colleges in Nevada and Maryland.

Since 1978, Dr. Laguerre has taught English as a second language, French, Haitian, Physics and Mathematics. He has published, in cooperation with Bryant C.

Freeman, a Haitian-English dictionary and he recently published with Dr. Cécile Accilien a Haitian Phrasebook and is working on a Haitian-Creole textbook for those who want to learn Haitian-Creole.

He founded Teachers of Tomorrow to recruit young people into the teaching profession in response to the shortage of minority teachers. He was Director of the I Have a Dream program in Kansas City, Missouri, where he mentored fifty-nine African-American young men and women to become college students.

At Solano Community College, Dr. Laguerre was instrumental in approving and supporting the UMOJA program which caters to African-American students. The African-American Male Scholars Club originated from UMOJA. He is the 1988 U.S. Department of Education Christa McAuliffe Fellow for the state of Kansas and was selected and recognized as Educator of the Year by the Montgomery County African-American Chamber of Commerce.

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