



The Peralta Retiree

July-September 2016

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<http://www.peraltaretirees.org>

From the President...

by Debby Weintraub, PRO President

I have been retired for four years. Still, when the end of May rolls by I begin to feel that same sense of endless possibilities for summer days that I felt when I taught, despite the fact that now I have many summer days all year round. There is something about the rhythm of the academic school year that remains deep within; it still sets off the summer dreams at the end of a spring semester and now, midway through July, I am finding myself wondering what my new goals and accomplishments should be for the year ahead. I think, too, no matter in what capacity we served the Peralta community, the academic calendar has a strong hold on the psyche.

One of my goals for this upcoming year is to figure out how to entice more retired Peralta folks to participate with PRO. I would like to find meaningful ways for more people to be connected with the organization. In the past, PRO has sponsored lovely social events. But because two devoted Board members, Linda Japzon and Jay Quesada, have stepped down from the Board, our social calendar for next year is pretty bare. Linda and Jay had made sure we had a spring garden party, a summer picnic, a fall luncheon for the membership, and often a jazz or theater date thrown in too. This year we were unable to sponsor the May garden party or small get-togethers as we had no one able (willing) to take over the work of organizing such events.

However, we will be having our annual summer picnic on Thursday, August 11, in Roberts Park, Oakland. But instead of an event where drinks, salads, plates and utensils are provided, it will be a bring-your-own-everything because we do not have a functioning social committee. Everyone on the Board and regular attendees agree that the

gatherings are fun and are a wonderful way to connect with former colleagues. So what would it take to encourage you, dear PRO newsletter reader, to consider giving a few hours a year to make PRO gatherings a reality?

Since Pat England, Jay, Linda and Yvonne Price stepped down from the Board, we have no classified or confidential retirees serving on the Board. The Board would like to see all sectors of the Peralta retiree community represented and to have the voice of former classified and confidential personnel heard.

When Yvonne left the Board, we not only lost a representative of the confidential retirees (as well as a former part time instructor) but we lost the person who had taken responsibility for organizing the PRO scholarships. This spring several of us took on the multiple tasks that Yvonne handled so beautifully, but it would be great if someone from the PRO membership would consider overseeing the PRO scholarships. Could that be you, dear reader?

Many of us on the Board have also become very excited about the idea of creating a speakers series as a way of engaging more members with the organization. The idea would be that PRO, (sometimes in conjunction with Peralta unions and the district)

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would sponsor speakers to address the membership, and any other interested citizens, on topics of concern to us. Some suggestions are: What is happening to promised pensions and benefits for retirees in California as well as around the country? What is happening with Social Security reforms, particularly for teachers in California? How will the push towards privatizing public education impact the community colleges, and particularly, how has this movement impacted Peralta? Having a speaker from EVOLVE (a California group working to reform Proposition 13) explain how changing the tax structure could significantly alter the future of all Californians. What is there to know about Medicare and the Affordable Care Act as they affect Peralta retirees. In order to organize the series, it would be great to have some PRO members volunteer to be part of the organizing team. What topics might motivate you to attend such a series? If you think such a series might interest you in any way, please let me know.

The tempo and the possibilities of the academic

Peralta Retirees Organization

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year beckon and once again, remind me that I can start something new. Hopefully you feel that too. I look forward to working with you in 2016/17.

Retiree Mayfield Wins Award For Critical Thinking Textbook

Peralta retiree Marlys Mayfield has been honored by the Textbook & Academic Authors Association. The 9th edition of her college textbook, *Thinking for Yourself: Developing Critical Thinking Skills Through Reading and Writing* has just received the 2016 McGuffey Longevity Award.



Marlys Mayfield

In the early 1980's Marlys became interested in the question of whether thinking might be taught academically as a skill, and in particular, improved through writing. She also enjoyed the freedom of being able to invent new courses for the College of Alameda where she was full-time instructor in English and humanities.

It was just at this time that California passed some new General Education requirements, including the teaching of critical thinking that encouraged that it be taught through a variety of courses besides philosophy and logic. With the encouragement and support of the COA Language Arts Division Chair, then Donald Hongisto, Marlys designed a new kind of English composition course that would feature critical thinking instruction. And since no textbooks then existed for this purpose, she gradually created her own on the basis of what she learned from her students about what they needed to know.

What finally emerged from this experiment was a textbook published by Wadsworth in 1987; it contained a new pedagogy for integrating critical thinking with composition that that became available for adoption by colleges all over the U.S. and Canada.

What followed were eight more editions, each requiring a year of full-time work to incorporate reviewer feedback, update the social and political examples, provide new readings, cartoons, photos, and compose new chapters and testing materials.

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PRO Scholarship Recipients for 2016

This year the PRO Scholarship Fund awarded a \$1500 scholarship to a student at each of the Peralta colleges as part of our continuing commitment to Peralta's educational mission. The recipients were chosen jointly by the scholarship committees at each of the colleges and by volunteer members of PRO. The selected students 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 usually announced during an award ceremony held by each college. This year Berkeley City College did not hold a ceremony and the students at both Merritt and Laney were unable to attend the ceremony.

Berkeley City College

Student: **Emma Steinheimer**

Readers: **Linda Berry and Mark Greenside**

Emma Steinheimer developed an interest in and passion for teaching communication and language skills when she started tutoring a young man with a learning disability as a teenager. That interest was further piqued when she became a Girl Scout troop leader for girls from low-income, at-risk communities.



Emma Steinheimer

While studying at BCC, Emma worked at We Rock The Spectrum, a gym for children with mental and learning disabilities. Interacting with them, she "realized that many of these kids had difficulties learning to speak or communicate effectively. Working with so many children who struggled with language and speech issues turned out to be a major turning point in thinking about my career. I realized that I didn't just want to teach; I wanted to teach Communication and English." Working at the gym helped satisfy her desire to help others less fortunate

than herself, and she became increasingly aware of the specific economic, educational, and social inequalities faced by these kids and their families. "Understanding social and educational inequities inspires me to teach children of all backgrounds, especially those who are disenfranchised, because I believe everyone is entitled to the same quality education."

Emma is passionate about education and dedicated to the dream of becoming a teacher who serves everyone.

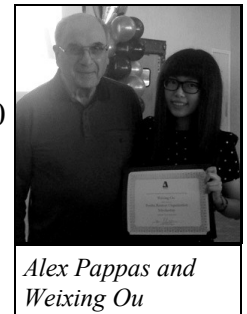
College of Alameda

Student: **Weixing Ou**

Presenter: **Alex Pappas**

Readers: **Edy Chan and Debby Weintraub**

Weixing Ou arrived in the US from China in 2013, overcoming language barriers to achieve a 4.0 GPA for seven semesters. She is majoring in biochemistry and plans to either become a doctor or to work in the field doing research. Her dream is to improve peoples' lives using her professional skills.



Alex Pappas and Weixing Ou

Besides achieving academic excellence Weixing is active in a variety of extra-curricular activities. Among other pursuits she serves as a senator in CoA's student government, tutors in the college chemistry lab and volunteers at the Red Cross Blood Donation Program. Coming from a low-income family means that she needs to find resources like the PRO scholarship to continue her education.

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It's Finally Time to Take on Proposition 13

Proposition 13 (officially named the People's Initiative to Limit Property Taxation) was an amendment of the Constitution of California enacted during 1978, by means of the initiative power. It was approved by California voters in June 1978. Prop 13 continues to massively affect California's K-12 and community college funding, having transferred the primary source of education funds from local communities to the state. Many Californians have been interested for some time in making changes in Prop 13 so as to allow for a 'split roll,' that is to tax residential property differently from commercial property. The article below was submitted to PRO from Evolve, an organization that is working to effect that change.—BJ

By Ben Grieff

For the first time since Prop. 13 passed in 1978, legislation (SCA-5) has been introduced to cut out the commercial side of the measure, leaving intact protections for residential property owners. The importance of Sacramento finally acquiescing to join this critical conversation around Prop. 13 cannot be understated. Since 1978, as funding for public education and services steadily declined, various stakeholders in the know — mostly tax reform enthusiasts, dyed-in-the-wool progressives, and long-suffering foot soldiers in the farcically underfunded fields of education and public services—loudly did their damndest to sound the alarm. As a result, terms like “split-roll” and “corporate loopholes” found their way into the margins of the public discourse. Yet despite local and state government resorting to increasingly convoluted and regressive means of raising revenue, the often somewhat policy-wonkish appeals for Prop. 13 reform never really caught fire.

On the other side of the spectrum, the well-funded and organized propaganda machine of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, (named after the leader of the “Prop. 13 taxpayers revolt”), has hammered home effective, if somewhat hysterical messaging: mostly centered around a strategy of scaring older homeowners into believing their Prop. 13 protections are constantly under threat.

For nearly 40 years, they have erroneously convinced most Californians that Prop. 13 has nothing

to do with commercial property. In reality, because ownership of commercial property changes less frequently than residential, Prop. 13 has been better for commercial property owners than anyone else. Today, commercial property accounts for only 28% of property taxes, while residential property owners shoulder 72% of the burden. In 1978 the split was 45% commercial and 55% residential .

Most states tax commercial property at a higher rate, and every other state regularly reassesses their commercial property to fair market rate. This creates more stable revenue, and puts businesses on a level playing field, encouraging new business growth instead of privileging the lucky few that have held on to their property for the longest. Even in Kansas, currently in the throes of extreme Tea Party tax “experimentation,” the property tax has remained largely immune to cuts. Perhaps more importantly, by regularly reassessing commercial property, it ensures that other states’ citizens don’t have to shoulder increasingly high personal income and regressive sales tax burdens (California has the highest rates of each, respectively, in the country).

SCA-5 calls for regular reassessment of commercial property in California to put the state on par with the rest of the country and will restore \$9 billion annually to local schools and public services. The bill’s introduction has been accompanied by the efforts of a coalition of over 250 groups statewide, getting the word out, and finally using the sort of simple messaging that the issue warrants: Prop. 13 was passed to protect people, not large corporations.

San Francisco based Evolve California has been pioneering innovative grassroots organizing around this issue for more than 3 years and has gotten 117 schoolboards and city councils in 21 counties to pass resolutions calling for this critical reform. Additionally, by organizing a grassroots network of support, over 900 elected officials around the state have now endorsed Prop. 13 reform. Change is in the air, but much more grassroots organizing to educate Californians about this unique form of corpo-

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PRO's Annual Picnic

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

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

Come have fun and catch up with old friends and colleagues.

Bring your picnic lunch and any 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: Email us to let us know that you're coming: webmaster@peraltaretirees.org

(PRO Scholarship... Continued from page 3)

Laney College

Student: **Luis Sanchez**

Readers: **John Lodato and Anna Pavelka-Lodato**

The story of Luis Sanchez may be familiar but it is still inspiring. He dropped out of high school in the ninth grade because of serious family problems, but when he went back the next year, he was discouraged to discover how far behind he was and dropped out again.



Luis Sanchez

For the next two years "I did nothing but work and stay home playing video games. This is the experience I learned from the most because I saw firsthand what giving up brings me and how it affects

those around me." At that point he turned his life around. He found a program called Gateway to College that allowed high school dropouts to take courses that would lead to high school graduation. He flourished in an environment where participants were motivated to learn and succeed and became the first member of his family to graduate high school and go on to college.

He developed strong self-discipline in his academic work, sacrificing personal pleasures until he finished his assignments. The result has been ten semesters of straight A's. He says, "I truly believe my experiences have helped me persevere. They have made me into a resilient and diligent individual and those are the qualities in myself I am most proud of." Luis is headed toward a career in technology where he wants to develop new products that will serve people.

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During this time Marlys found special support from Peralta colleagues Jerry Herman, Allen Shulakoff, and Raquel Wanzo who were all long-time adopters and contributors to numerous revisions.

In a statement to us Marlys emphasized that all this could never have been accomplished without Peralta Colleges' open encouragement of teaching innovation— and its students toleration of and participation in the same!

Below are some excerpts of quotes from the judges about the book:

"This book should win an award for several reasons. The author has been very creative in developing key topics and elements to teach critical thinking, that is, she has put together something that has not existed and it much needed. I could use many of the chapters with my doctoral students in their leadership courses, and in their writing courses.... As an academic who has had to teach critical thinking and search for materials in several places, I was very impressed with this book. One could truly see the time, energy, and love the author has put into its development.

"Marlys Mayfield's *Thinking for Yourself* deserves hands-down to win the McGuffey Longevity Award in Humanities, Education, and Social Sciences. This is a deeply original, often brilliant textbook that takes on the difficult goal of turning students into critical thinkers and succeeds more completely than any text I have seen. Mayfield is the real thing: a text author with a unique vision whose fascinating, enjoyable instruction and practice tasks address one of the most serious problems educators face: our students can't think critically, can't see through manipulation and bias, and don't understand the work it takes to reason well. This text doesn't pander or recycle the ideas in other books. It challenges students on page after page, but keeps instruction fascinating and enjoyable. Many practices deftly target sub-skills, guiding students to distinguish between fact and interpretation, to infer, detect assumptions, recognize political viewpoints (something I've never seen taught)... Very rarely do I encounter a textbook that surprises me with its authenticity, creativity, and quality, but *Thinking for Yourself* has done that."

PRO/PFT Workshop for New Retirees

About 20 Peralta employees attended the annual PRO/PFT sponsored workshop that focuses on helping potential retirees understand how Peralta medical benefits work with Medicare after retirement. PRO VP Bruce Jacobs was the main speaker while PRO President Debby Weintraub and PRO Board Member Patricia Dudley provided support. Several of the attendees joined PRO at the workshop in anticipation of their retirement.



Patricia Dudley, Bruce Jacobs and PRO President Debby Weintraub

Welcome New Members

PRO welcomes the following retirees who have recently joined.

Manuel Alcala
Juana Alicia Araiza
April Bankhead
Lawrence Chan
Nghy Dong
Nathan Strong

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:

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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
Joseph Lonero	Laura Broad
Joseph Lonero	Linda Dinerstein
Joseph Lonero	Carol Kessler
Joseph Lonero	Marilyn Martin-Beanum
Victoria Redus	Margot Dashiell
General Contributions	
Ida Asato	

IN MEMORIAM

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

**Frankie Arrington
Tiffany Gin
Boris Gregory
Proverb Jacobs, Jr.
Joseph Lonero
Janet Poulos**

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

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Merritt College

Student: **Lisa Camarillo**

Readers: **Pat England and Bruce Jacobs**

Lisa Camarillo joined the workforce shortly after high school, working in the accounting field and gradually getting promoted. When she became a single mother with sole financial responsibility for the household, she knew she needed more. She did everything possible to make ends meet. For two years she worked four jobs to keep her head above water. It was then that she realized she did not want the “hustle to survive” lifestyle. “I was finally able to earn enough money to work one job and be comfortable. Shortly after that, I was laid off. I knew then that returning to school would help me achieve my goals.”



Lisa Camarillo

Lisa is studying anthropology. Being half Irish and half Mexican she has struggled to find acceptance in both communities. Anthropology has provided her with a holistic view of the world and enabled her to break down cultural barriers. She “hopes to globalize communities so they can work constructively together to reach equality.” And in this process, she hopes to “become an advocate for social justice and empowering people in need. Knowing that I can help others who have struggled to reach their full potential from lack of support will satisfy the passion I feel for my community and the sustainability of the human race.”

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rate welfare is needed. As a 100% membership-funded organization, Evolve runs on grassroots donations from people all around the state who are ready to see our schools and public services re-funded and corporations finally paying their fair share of property taxes. You can learn more about the campaign at: <http://www.evolve-ca.org>

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