



From the President...

By Debby Weintraub

Greetings PRO Members,

When I was a very young girl, one of my older cousins, Laddie, invited my two older siblings and myself to join his Fun for All Club. Laddie's primary motivation had been to start a club that would exclude his older sister, but he also promised us a very good time. My brother, sister and I chanted the motto of our club as Laddie directed, "Fun for all, all for fun" with no sense of irony. It was a few years later that I felt guilt about excluding Laddie's sister (my cousin) from our fun and a little longer still until I became literate enough that I learned our club motto was a play on Alexandre Dumas's, *The Three Musketeers*, "All for One, One for All" — meaning **all the** members of a group support each of the individual members, and the individual members pledge to support the group.

The recollection of that childhood club and motto came back to me recently as I was reading about the progress the Universal Health Care Bill (SB 562) is making in California. For so many years our health care system has been designed to exclude people — just like my childhood Fun for All Club. But, we need a health care system that is rooted in the ideology of, "All for one, one for all", which I think is the core of SB 562, which recently passed in the California Senate.

As retirees of Peralta, we have been very fortunate in our access to excellent affordable health care, but we should keep in mind that currently many of our younger colleagues will not have the same options as we did. I hope PRO as an organization will not be like my childhood self that decided to exclude one of my cousins because I was getting what I needed.



Save The Date...

PRO's Annual Picnic
Wednesday, August 30
Noon to 3 pm
Huckleberry Picnic Area
of Roberts Regional
Recreation Area

Details on page 3

Instead, I hope as retirees with good health care we will see it is in our interest to join the movement for Universal Health Care in California. To learn more specifics, read Tim Redmond's piece about SB 562 in this newsletter. (See page 4)

Turning slightly from the larger issue of equitable health care for all and my hopes for PRO's participation in such an endeavor, I want to report on a recent meeting Jerry Herman, Michael Mills and I had with the Chancellor about retiree health care concerns. We knew the Chancellor was interested in discussing our health care, and initially

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we thought the meeting might center on ways in which the Benefits Office could support and work with retirees. But the Chancellor wanted to focus on how the OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) Bonds, which help to fund our lifetime benefits, were being managed.

We had a lengthy and wide-ranging discussion about the management of the bonds. PRO's main concern is that it be very clear to all that the sole purpose of the OPEB Bonds is to cover pre-July 2004 hires' retiree health benefits, and that no matter how the OPEB bonds are managed, the district has an obligation to fund those retirees' lifetime health benefits. Jerry, Michael and I hope to have more conversations with the Chancellor on this topic, and to also re-visit ways in which the Benefits Office can have the support it needs to provide the best service possible for active and retired Peralta folks. We would like the culture of the Benefits Office to be one of advocacy and access.

The close of the academic year brings several important traditional events for PRO: the awarding and distribution of our PRO Scholarships and our May gathering for all our members, their family and guests.

This year our PRO scholarships went to the following students:

Calvin Thach (Laney), Diljit Baines (COA), Alecia Barnes (Merritt), and Kristopher C Mandell (BCC). Special thanks to the PRO members who graciously volunteered to read and score the final applications: Jose Ortiz and Marie Wilson read the submissions for Merritt College; Yvonne Price Lewis and Bill Sato reviewed the Laney applications; Edy Chan and Helene Maxwell selected the CoA student, and Celia Correa and I had the pleasure of reading the essays and other needed materials for the hopeful scholarship recipients from BCC. Once again, Alex Pappas agreed to present the \$1,500 check to CoA's winner, and in addition spent another evening at Laney College's award ceremony. Keiko James at the Peralta Foundation deserves special thanks for organizing and facilitating the whole process; without Keiko we could not get our scholarships awarded. More informa-

tion on the winners can be found in this newsletter. (See page 8)

On May 19, we held a delicious catered luncheon at the Oakland Museum for PRO members and their guests. We had a room with large windows looking out at the Koi Pond and all the activity in the lower courtyard of the museum. In addition to the delightful conversations and good eats, a group of people took advantage of a docent tour of the Dorothea Lange exhibit offered as part of the day's activities. Kudos to John and Anna Lodato for doing an excellent job with the arranging and organizing of this lovely day. Our next PRO social event is the annual picnic which will be held as usual at the Huckleberry Picnic Area in Redwood Regional Park on Wednesday, August 30. (See page 3 for details)

If you are traveling this summer, I hope your travels are joyful and safe.

Peralta Retirees Organization

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Volume 13 Number 4

PRO's Annual Picnic



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

Wednesday, August 30 from noon to 3 pm

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

**RSVP: Email us to let us know that you're coming:
webmaster@peraltaretirees.org**



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.

The Big Media Lie of \$400 Billion

By Tim Redmond

(Tim Redmond has been a political and investigative reporter in San Francisco for more than 30 years. He spent much of that time as executive editor of the Bay Guardian. He is the founder of 48hills. This article is excerpted from his blog.)

The headlines were so consistent, so predictably bad, that I almost couldn't read them. "Single-payer will cost \$400 billion." "Single-payer costs dwarf entire state budget."

Even when the state Senate approved the measure, here's what the Bay Area News Group had to say:

SACRAMENTO — As a legislative deadline loomed, California senators Thursday — in some cases, reluctantly — voted to pass a \$400 billion plan to create a government-run health care system without a way to pay for it.

As the single-payer bill heads to the state Assembly, this is exactly the media message that the private insurance and pharma industry wants. And it's utterly, completely, embarrassingly inaccurate.

Here's the reality that gets lost in the headlines:

California already spends \$368 billion a year on

health care, and that's with 2.5 million uninsured people and about 12 million who have such limited insurance that they can't always get the care they need.

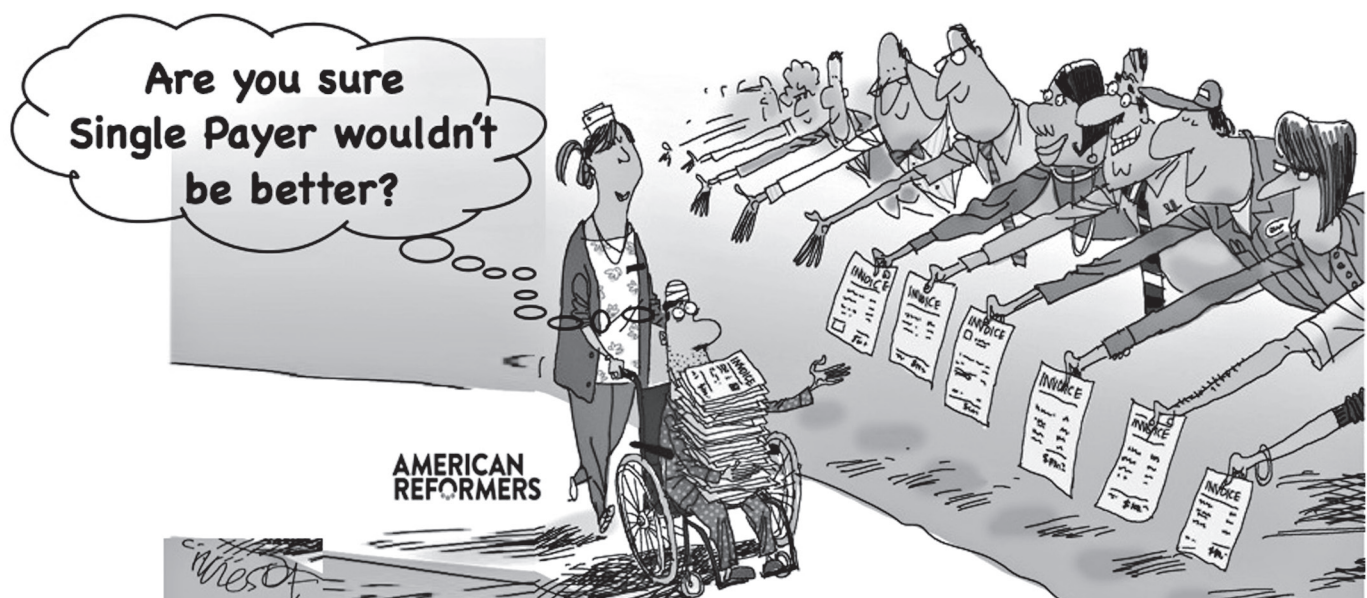
In ten years, studies show, that price ticket will be \$587 billion — half a trillion bucks, 20 percent of the state's entire economy.

So private insurance already costs pretty close to \$400 billion — and it's failing and unsustainable.

With single-payer, the *cost would drop to \$331 billion* — meaning the people and businesses in California would pay *\$37 billion less* than they are paying now for health care, a new study shows.

That money we pay now for a dysfunctional system comes from the same place the state budget comes from — federal reimbursements and individuals and businesses who pay taxes. There's no difference between money that I pay every month out of my pocket for health insurance and money that I could pay every month in taxes to the state so that everyone has health insurance — except for the fact that if I paid the money to the state, it would cost me a lot less.

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(Big Media Lie...Continued from page 4)

In fact, a study by one of the most eminent economists in the country shows nearly everyone in California would pay substantially less every year for health care if we went to a single-payer system.

Again, in simple language for my colleagues who can't seem to understand this: That big-ticket dollar sign the insurance industry is putting out, that number way bigger than the state budget? *We are already paying that.* And we aren't getting our money's worth.

What single-payer would do is eliminate the middle-man. Instead of writing a big check to the insurance industry every month, businesses and individuals would write a smaller check to the state of California. Instead of dealing with a profit-seeking industry that goes out of its way to deny claims for care, your doctor would get paid by the state.

Oh, and all those government agencies that use taxpayer money to employ workers and pay their health care? They wouldn't be paying massive bills to private companies for health care anymore. That means the workers could take home more money and the taxpayers would be on the hook for less.

This is how it works in most of the developed world, where costs are far lower and results far better than we see in the United States.

Is there anything about this that is even a bit confusing?

Some basic truths

The first is that the \$400 billion figure is based on the existing system. Covering all of the uninsured and underinsured people would, indeed, increase overall spending by 9.1 percent, from \$368 billion to \$404.1 billion — if we just kept doing what we do now.

But if we got rid of the private insurance industry, the costs of delivering care would drop radically.

In fact, the total cost of providing care to everyone — which is a lot more than we do now — would drop to \$331 billion. That means the people of the state of California would save \$37 billion, more

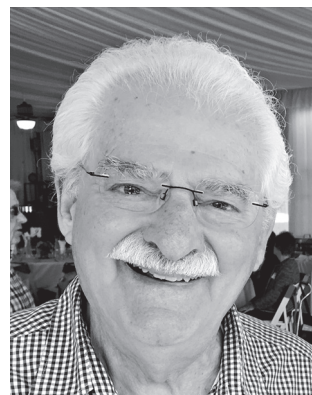
than ten percent, immediately, by implementing single-payer.

Where would that \$331 billion come from? Most of it would come from the existing money that the federal government spends underwriting Medicare and Medi-Cal.

The difference is that those workers will not be trained to deny claims. The last time data was available, the California Nurses Association found that the seven largest private insurers in the state denied 26 percent of all the claims that were put in by people who paid them money for health insurance.

Chuck Idelson, a spokesperson for the California Nurses Association, which is backing the single-payer bill, told me that the media coverage has been a problem. "Once a media narrative gets spun, anyone who tries to counter it is considered an outsider. That's what we're faced with, since so much of this is counter to the reality." The reality, he said, is that the current system is completely unsustainable. Hard to argue with that.

Remo Arancio Leaves PRO Board



Remo Arancio

PRO Board member Remo Arancio has retired from the PRO Board. Remo was a founding member of PRO and has served on the Board since 2004. Over the years he has demonstrated a deep knowledge about Peralta having served as both a faculty member and administrator in the District for many, many years. In every PRO Board discussion he could be counted on to bring a wise, thoughtful perspective. He took on the responsibility, along with former Board member Ann Whitehead, of mailing the newsletters every quarter. The Board acknowledged Remo's contributions with a gift card and wishes him well. We know he will continue to contribute to PRO and we look forward to seeing him at future PRO events.

Britain's National Health Service is a Disaster — A Trumped Up Fake News Fable

By Jerry Herman

PRO's former President, Jerry Herman, was in England recently and sent PRO a satirical report on his experience with Britain's National Health Service.—Ed.

Almost always when we travel I forget to take some significant item, and this trip to London has proven to be no exception. I thought I had packed all my pills in their containers with the little compartments for each day of the week. But when I looked for my nightly dose of Lipitor I found the significant item I left at home. I imagine I could survive for a Lipitorless month without my cholesterol going through the roof, but why take the chance if I could get some here in London town?

I thought all I'd have to do was have my doctor fax a prescription to a neighborhood pharmacy (they don't call them chemists anymore) and within the couple of days needed to fill the prescription I'd have my Lipitor and all would be well. That's when the National Health Service nightmare began. Call it what you will: single payer, Medicare for all, socialized medicine, the truth is that it was a scheme cooked up in Karl Marx's basement with later embellishments by Lenin and Stalin, a diabolical plan to trick people into believing that all of a nation's citizens were to get free medical care when, at bottom, it was an ingenious device for the government to control everyone's lives, quashing liberty and free will. And here I was at Ground Zero, the motherland of socialized medicine, about to become a helpless foreigner victim to this malevolence if I wasn't careful.

I was told by the clerk at the pharmacy that a faxed prescription wouldn't be honored here in the UK— of course not. I wouldn't be trapped that way. That's when the soul-deadening bureaucratic cogs began to grind. I would have to see a physician to get the prescription, and who knew how

many months that would take? I was ready to beat it without my medication, but I thought I'd play their vicious game just to document how inefficient and spirit-sapping the hated Nation Health Service is. (Those of you who have heard that most Brits like the NHS have been deceived by fake news. Believe me.) I was told to see a doctor at an Urgent Care Centre to get my Lipitor. Disgusted, I inquired with dripping disdain, "And exactly how far away from here is an "Urgent Care Centre"?" "The hospital is right across the street, and you actually can see the big red sign for the Urgent Care Centre — Emergency Room from here." Self-righteous Brit twit.



Jerry Herman

I crossed over and entered the Urgent Care Centre. I can't say I was surprised that there was no security guard at the door to screen people. Because the system is going broke, there probably isn't enough money to pay for adequate security so just anybody can walk in, unscreened, to get treatment. Scary.

The room was large and well-lit with rows of new-looking chairs. The place was clean and freshly painted. All of this an obvious ruse to pacify the victims of the National Hell Service so they wouldn't revolt on the spot. About a third of the chairs were occupied, a sure sign that people were staying away to avoid the overcrowding of the NHS waiting rooms. Remember what Yogi Berra once said about a popular night spot: "It's so crowded that nobody goes there anymore."

So far, all of my ideas about the oppressiveness of the NHS had been confirmed. More was to come: At the reception counter I was given forms to fill out (naturally) that probed into private business

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(Britain's NHS Disaster...Continued from page 6)
that I have a right to keep secret like my name, age, and medical history. Why the hell do they have to know that stuff just to give me some pills? After an entire half hour I was called in to see a nurse who also crossed the privacy line under the guise that she would pass the information to a doctor. I kept going through the process just to fully experience how horrible it is even though my soul was beginning to fray around the edges.

After another interminable twenty minutes I was ushered into an office by a man who identified himself as a doctor though he showed me no proof. He, too, asked offensive questions like where I came from. When I admitted I was from California, he said he had been there and loved it, all the while giving me a conspiratorial smile which clearly said, "Can you get me out of this awful job so I can go to California and be free to practice for-profit medicine as God intended me to?" I actually felt sorry for the poor "bloke" so I never revealed that California is nearly as bad as Britain. After looking at the notes the nurse had given him, he filled out a prescription form and gave it to me. With what I'm sure was a sarcastic wink, he said, "Good luck."

It had taken me an entire hour to get this prescription. What unbelievable inefficiency! An hour of my life given over to the British National Health Service, an hour under the torturous yoke of socialized medicine. But I wasn't done yet. The prescription had to be filled. I went back across the street to the pharmacy where I had to wait in line (of course) for the one person ahead of me to be served. At my turn I gave the prescription to the clerk thinking she'd give me a receipt and tell me to come back in two days. Instead, she turned around and pulled a box off the shelf and began to fill out some forms (naturally). She handed me the box on which was printed, "Lipitor – 28 film coated tablets." I was appalled. In the US a pharmacist must have six years of education to take tablets out of a large container and professionally count them and then put them in a smaller container. It usually takes from a couple of hours to a full day to get this done because the professional

pill counting is so necessarily time-consuming. It's that kind of quality control that makes the American medical system the best in the world.

Suppressing my outrage at this lack of personal professional care, I took the box of tablets and waited for the clerk to calculate the charges. She filled out some other forms and turned to me. "What's the cost?" I asked. With what was no doubt a mocking smile, she said, "Nothing ... free." She must have thought me a complete idiot to say the price twice, in two different ways, so that my feeble brain could register it. That's the contempt the NHS bureaucrats have for the poor souls they purport to be serving.

I think I've proven my point about the British NHS. I know some of you out there (you know who you are) might want some more "evidence" to support my conclusions about how bad the NHS is. You've been brainwashed by a corrupt system, victimized by liberal education, unable to use common sense — like your own experience — to make up your mind. Well, not me. I've got all the evidence I need to believe that the British National Health Service is a disaster, a debacle, a catastrophe — maybe the worst health care system in history. End of story!

New Editor for PRO Newsletter

Bruce Jacobs has been the editor of *The Peralta Retiree* for the last 13 years. Bruce is retiring from that position. Helene Maxwell has offered to step in as editor. They will be working together during a transition period.



Helene Maxwell

Erratum

In the last issue of *The Peralta Retiree* the URL for the Pleural Mesothelioma Center was printed incorrectly. It should be: <https://www.pleuralmesothelioma.com/cancer>

PRO Scholarship Recipients for 2017

Each year through generous donations from PRO members, one student from each college is chosen as a recipient for the PRO \$1500 scholarship. Those of us who evaluated and scored essays submitted by the top applicants came away with even greater appreciation for our students, their aspirations, and the obstacles they have overcome to pursue higher education.

Here are the winners for 2017:

Kristopher C. Mandell – BCC

Readers: Celia Correa and Debra Weintraub

Kristopher started his own theater company which ran successfully for 8 years. He has been accepted to SFSU for Fall '17 where he plans to combine art theory and practice and then go on to earn an MFA/MA degree. Kristopher currently teaches at the NIAD Art Center in Richmond where he works with artists with disabilities. He believes that art is a critical component of education at all levels.

Diljit Bains – COA

Readers: Edy Chan and Helene Maxwell

Diljit wrote passionately about the prevalence of environment discrimination in many low-income communities. He is active with the Sikh Congressional Caucus which focuses on issues important

to Sikh-Americans. After completing his degree in Biology, Diljit plans to become a physician and work as an advocate to counter the negative effects of environmental discrimination.

Alecia Barnes – Merritt

Readers: Jose Ortiz and Marie Wilson

Alecia describes herself as a survivor and “grit personified.” She currently works through the Oakland Teen Empowerment Scholarship with at risk teen-aged girls who live in foster homes and those deemed to be at high risk for drug addiction and prostitution. Alecia has been accepted into the Bridges to Baccalaureate Program which provides tutoring for science majors who wish to attend UC Berkeley. Her goal is to transfer to UC Berkeley and subsequently work toward an advanced degree.



Alecia Barnes

Contributions Received for the PRO Scholarship Fund

In Memory of: Contributor

Bill Bell	Margaret Maloney
Giles Faget	Ed Minasian
Marion Fay	Margaret Maloney
Jenette Golds	Antoinette Lesperance
Jenette Golds	Ed Minasian
Jenette Golds	William Sato
Paul Harlis	Ed Minasian
Vic Japzon	Margaret Maloney
Vic Japzon	Barbara and Tom Southworth
Ron Jones	John and Anna Lodato
Nathan Strong	Margaret Maloney
Ed Walker	William Sato

Calvin Thach – Laney

Readers: Yvonne Price Lewis and Bill Sato

Calvin grew up in East Oakland in a supportive low-income family. Because there weren't many toys, he used his imagination for entertainment and found comfort, joy, and purpose in the stories he created. His goal is to earn a BA in English and Ethnic Studies and to become a writer and activist so that young people in low-income communities have the resources to reach their full potential.



Calvin Thach

PRO Party at the Oakland Museum

About 35 PRO members and friends gathered on Friday, May 19, for a luncheon at the Oakland Museum of California. The weather was delightful, the exhibits were exciting, the food was delicious, and the company, as with every PRO gathering, was congenial and friendly.

A highlight was the docent-conducted tour of the current Dorothea Lange exhibit which will continue at the Museum until August 13. Nancy River wrote, "Originally I was doubtful I would do the tour, but so glad I did; it was great." All in all, a perfect afternoon with everyone looking forward to the next PRO party.



OAK MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA The museum of us.

DOROTHEA LANGE: POLITICS OF SEEING



Sue Chin and Rita Haberlin



Odell Johnson and Harvey Chin



Nancy Pak and Karen Anderson



Myrtle Bennett and Shirley Coaston



Telly Castro and Jane Woo



John Lodato

Retiree Sonja Franeta Is Peralta's Lady of Spain

By Sonia Freneta

Peralta Retiree Sonja Freneta has moved to Spain and is spending her retirement living there. We thought you would enjoy hearing about her life.
—Ed.

The idea of retiring in Spain came to us when we visited a Russian friend of ours who had retired for part of the year there. It was pouring rain when we came to the small town of Laredo with its gorgeous five kilometer-long sandy beach, charming cobblestoned Old Town, and green hills and coastline along the northern route of the Camino de Santiago and it was irresistible. We found our place the following year and bought it with the help of a lawyer. This year we worked on residency which was not an easy process but we managed

to gather our papers and talk with the consulate. After our temporary residency came through, we were told to check in with local Spanish authorities annually and in five years we could apply for permanent residence.

Laredo, Cantabria, used to be one of the important cities of Spain, ever since Charles V landed there in the 16th century. After encountering terrible storms on his way to Spain from the Netherlands, he stepped onto the beach, knelt to the ground, and said "Salve!" And that is the name of Laredo's beautiful beach to this day. Laredo's prominence grew and then fell during the plague in the early 17th century, when much of the population suffered and died. Now, with inhabitants of about 12,000, it is a resort town that was built up dur-

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Sonja Freneta

(Sonja Freneta's Spain...Continued from page 10)

ing the 1960s with condos and houses along the beach, where Spaniards and Europeans come to vacation. Constructed mostly from the 12th to 15th centuries, the Old Town (Puebla Vieja) still retains its old flavor.

Not far from our place is the oldest building in Laredo (1068), the church of San Martin with its unique seven bells. Our apartment is in a fifteenth century building and attached to the original 13th century wall. Three stories high, it has a “taberna” or restaurant and bar on the first floor and our apartment on the top floor had the old gun turrets. Next to our building is one of three remaining gates of the old town (originally there were 13). Beyond this gate is a steep five minute walk to a magnificent view of the Cantabrian coast. We enjoy hiking, swimming and local fiestas and foods. We have often seen pilgrims walking the Camino and stopping in town with their walking sticks and backpacks.

Mostly we love being here, away from U.S. political worries, in a place where we feel accepted as same-sex partners, and where we also have some friends. Spain instituted same-sex marriage in July of 2005, while the U.S. Supreme Court only ruled on it ten years later in 2015. Lena, my Russian friend, says, “you can feel the difference in acceptance, when it has been the law in Spain

for 12 years. It’s an institution.”

I asked Sue, my spouse, what she likes about Laredo. “It’s tranquil,” she said, “and there aren’t any other Americans.” I relish the countryside, the views, our apartment, friends, and the space to write. During the summer, there are concerts and art exhibits, and we are only about forty minutes away from Bilbao with its great Guggenheim museum. We have taken trips to nearby areas—Asturias, the Pyrenees, and Picos de Europa. We plan to visit other places in Spain as well, in Europe, and even Morocco.



Laredo, Spain



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.



You're invited to **PRO's Annual Picnic**

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

**Wednesday, August 30
from Noon – 3 PM**

Details on page 3

**Welcome
New Members**

*PRO welcomes the following retirees
who have recently joined.*

**James Meniffee
Nancy Pak**

IN MEMORIAM

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

Albert Kalgee

*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*

**Peralta Retirees Organization
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