



From the President...

By Debby Weintraub

At our final Board meeting of 2018 we very reluctantly had to say good bye to Anna Pavelka-Lodato and John Lodato as Board members. We will miss both of them.



John stepped up several years ago to take over coordinating and organizing PRO social events. He secured the sites for our annual summer picnic in Redwood Park, made arrangements for our yearly membership meetings and pulled together a memorable spring gathering at the Oakland Museum, including a docent tour of Dorothea Lange's photos. PRO appreciates his efforts and talents.

Anna has served as PRO Treasurer for many years. She performed numerous tasks including working with the Peralta Foundation to coordinate the scholarship fund money (no easy task), picking up the U.S. mail correspondence to PRO, distributing financial information to various PRO Board members and doing the accounting for our organization. Anna did this work with such efficiency we hardly noticed how time consuming and impeccable her work was—she just did it all and made it seem easy. There are no words to express our gratitude.

Fortunately, several PRO members have come forward to help. Telly Castro who already serves on the Board will take on the task of doing the accounting/bookkeeping for PRO. Karolyn Van Putten has agreed to take over all the mail Anna handled, and Stan Peters has joined the Board and is already contributing ideas and putting efforts into improving PRO's scholarship program. Shirley Coaston has also generously offered to help with mailing the PRO Newsletter.

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PRO Membership Renewal Due for Retirees Whose Membership Expired at the end of 2018.

Check the label on your newsletter to determine when your membership expires. If the label says 2018 or before, then you need to renew for 2019.

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We can still use more Board members and in the meanwhile have agreed to reduce the number of Board meetings. We will now meet as a full Board only four times a year: March, June, September and December. Several people will meet to mail the newsletter four other times a year. Our annual membership meeting will still be held in November.

PRO will continue to be an advocate for retirees, particularly with regard to our earned benefits. We will pay attention and keep our membership informed about pension plans, OPEB Bond health, District finances that may affect our retiree benefits and other issues of general concern to Peralta retirees.

As the new year starts and we all wish one another good health in the coming year, we should acknowledge how fortunate we are in regard to our health care benefits. Our health and our health care are among the most important things in our lives. When we retired, we expected the benefits we retired with to stay in place and I, like many of you, hoped that the Peralta Benefits Office would help navigate some of the difficulties that could arise when dealing with insurance companies, health care providers and Medicare.

The Peralta Benefits Office has long been underfunded and under-staffed, making it difficult for that office to provide the support employees and retirees need. In the last year, Jennifer Seibert and Trudy Largent left the Benefits/HR Office. One or two other employees in that office are also no longer there. Cody Peltier, recently hired permanently to take over Jennifer Seibert's position, will soon be leaving that job as well. Why all these changes? We don't really know. But what is clear is that the Benefits Office lacks stability and consistency of staff.

PRO has spoken with Chancellor Laguerre on several occasions about the need to better fund and staff the Benefits Office. We have suggested having a dedicated staff member to help retirees, perhaps not full-time, but someone who understands how Medicare and Peralta's self-funded plan works and is capable of helping retirees with questions and concerns about their benefits. We would like to see a person who has the time to help a retiree who may

not understand all the forms or has trouble with the very poorly-designed District Benefits Website. Even the best of us can be defeated by that webpage which, due to lack of time and will on the part of the District, remains difficult and frustrating to use. And people who are quite competent and confident handling most of their medical insurance issues have found certain billing problems beyond frustrating. The District Benefits Office should be there to guide us through the morass, not leave us to stew in it ourselves.

But we do have excellent health care benefits as retirees, so sometimes the problems and frustrations described above seem less important. Most of us know that our retiree benefits come as a result of our unions and the OPEB Bonds developed specifically to help fund retiree benefits. Recently the ACCJC, the accrediting agency for California community col-

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Peralta Retirees Organization

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Volume 15 Number 2

Renewal Due for Retirees Whose PRO Membership Expired at the End of 2018

Dues are

\$20	—	1 year
\$55	—	3 years
\$80	—	5 years
\$250	—	Lifetime

It's easier than ever to renew your membership in PRO. You can now pay your dues for 2019:



Check the label on your Newsletter to determine when your membership expires. If the label says 2018 or before, then you need to renew for 2019.

- securely by credit card at the PRO web site—Just go to: www.peraltaretirees.org/index.htm
- by mailing your check to:
PRO
484 Lake Park Ave., #598
Oakland, CA 94610-2730



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, 484 Lake Park Ave., #598, Oakland, CA 94610-2730

Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by federal and state law.

Know Your SPD—Using the Emergency Room

By Bruce Jacobs

This is the third in a series of articles that delineate benefits available to Peralta retirees who are enrolled in the CoreSource/Blue Cross option. All benefits are described in a document called the Summary Plan Description (SPD) which is available online at the My CoreSource web site: mycoresource.com. After you sign in you can access the document by using the “My Links” drop-down menu and choosing Peralta Comm. College Pre (or Post) 7-2004 Retiree Plan Document.

Access to the Emergency Room at the hospital is a crucial part of medical coverage. Especially as we get older, we may have symptoms that occur when our doctor’s office is closed, when we can’t reach our doctor, or when the symptoms are sufficiently severe that we want to be checked out as soon as possible. In those situations we may choose to use a hospital’s Emergency Room services knowing that our Peralta coverage will pay most or all of the expenses. It is important to remember, however, that emergency room services are expensive and should not be used as a substitute for regular periodic care by doctors in their offices.



How is an emergency defined?

The SPD for retirees defines an emergency as follows:

An accidental injury, or the sudden onset of an illness where the acute symptoms are of sufficient severity (including severe pain) so that a prudent layperson, who possesses an average knowledge of health and medicine, could reasonably expect the absence of immediate medical attention to result in:

- 1. Placing the covered person’s life (or with respect to a pregnant woman, the health of the woman or her unborn child) in serious jeopardy, or*
- 2. Causing other serious medical consequences, or*
- 3. Causing serious impairment to bodily functions, or*
- 4. Causing serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part.*

Using the emergency room services when these conditions prevail means that you will be covered by Peralta whether or not you are admitted to the hospital. Generally speaking, if you are admitted the insurer will consider that sufficient to justify your use of the emergency room. However, if you are not admitted you may have to appeal a decision to restrict coverage because of “non-emergency” use of the emergency room. In that case you will have to demonstrate that the emergency conditions defined above motivated you to use emergency services.

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(SPD: Emergency Room...Continued from page 4)

What is the Coverage if You Use the Hospital Emergency Room?

The coverage for using the emergency room will vary depending on when you retired:

Pre-July 1, 2004 Retirees

Emergency Room services are covered at 100% of either the negotiated rate (for in-network hospitals) or 100% of the *customary and reasonable amount* (for out of network hospitals) provided the visit was prompted by an emergency as defined in the SPD. For non-emergency use of the emergency room there is a \$25 co-pay, but benefits are still paid at the 100% rate (described above).



Post-July 1, 2004 Retirees

Emergency room services *for emergencies* are covered at 100% at both in-network (negotiated rate) and out-of-network (customary and reasonable amount) hospitals. There is no deductible but there is a \$35 co-pay. The co-pay is waived if you are admitted to the hospital. If you use emergency room services *for a non-emergency*, services are covered at 80% for both in-network and out-of-network hospitals. There is no deductible but there is a \$35 co-pay. Again the co-pay is waived if you are admitted to the hospital.

While it's important not to use the emergency room unnecessarily, you should always opt for emergency treatment if you are in severe pain or if you suspect that your condition might be life, organ, or limb threatening. If the insurer determines that you used emergency services in a non-emergency situation, remember to rely on the SPD definition of an emergency to make your case for full coverage.

Contributions Received for the PRO Scholarship Fund

Contributor	In Honor of:
Elaine Chen-Ramirez	Jerry Herman
Sue Chin	John Lodato and Anna Pavelka-Lodato
Catherine Crystal	Lucy Kinchen
Catherine Crystal	Sonja Franeta
Gertrude Fator	Shirley Nedham
Ronald Felzer	Michael Mills
Jerry Herman	The PRO Board
Helene Maxwell	John Lodato and Anna Pavelka-Lodato
Bill Sato	Bob Chin
Rip Talavera	Juanita Peterson
Rip Talavera	Proverb Jacobs
Debra Weintraub	John Lodato and Anna Pavelka-Lodato

Contributor	In Memory of:
Margot Dashiell	Smokey Wilson
Mark Greenside	Juanita Peterson
Mark Greenside	Lloyd Moffatt
Mark Greenside	Phyllis Jones
Rita Haberlin	Barbara and John Wheeler
Kenneth Hurst	Brenda Lacy
John Lodato and Anna Pavelka-Lodato	Jose Pena
John Lodato and Anna Pavelka-Lodato	Ron Jones
John Lodato and Anna Pavelka-Lodato	Bill Leal
Katherine Kocel	Alice Kocel
Patricia Smith	Juanita Peterson
Karolyn van Putten	Alice M. van Putten-Campbell

Millions of College Students Are Going Hungry

A new government report highlights how widespread the problem is

By Adam Harris
The Atlantic
January 9, 2019

As the costs of college have climbed, some students have gone hungry. When they've voiced frustration, they've often been ridiculed: "Ramen is cheap," or "Just eat cereal."

But the blight of food insecurity among college students is real, and a new report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO), a nonpartisan congressional watchdog, highlights the breadth of those affected. There are potentially millions of students at risk of being food insecure, which means they do not have access to nutritious, affordable food, the report says. It is the first time the federal government has acknowledged food insecurity on campus in a significant way. The federal government spends billions of dollars on higher education each year, and this report finds that some students are at risk of dropping out because they cannot eat, although there aren't good data on just how many.

Existing studies vary in how they describe the scale of the problem. "Nationally representative survey data that would support direct estimates of the prevalence of food insecurity among college students do not exist," the report says. So the GAO conducted a review of 31 studies that met their criteria—meaning they had been conducted in the United States since 2007 and did not have severe methodological limitations. Twenty-two of those 31 studies estimate that more than 30 percent of students are food insecure.

"[The report] put it very clearly for us that we can see that especially first-time students, first-gen

students, students who are raising children and single parents, face increasing obstacles to be able to complete that critical college degree," Senator Patty Murray, the top Democrat on the Senate's education committee, told me. The report was in response to a letter sent to the GAO on behalf of Murray, Senator Debbie Stabenow, Senator Edward Markey, and Senator Elizabeth Warren last year.



One chief way that campuses have been addressing hunger is by building food pantries on campus, but Sara Goldrick-Rab, a higher-education professor at Temple

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Welcome New Members

PRO welcomes the following retirees who have recently joined.

Eva Chin
Barbara Livingston-Bankston
Connie Willis

(College Students at Risk...Continued from page 6)

University and a leading scholar on campus hunger, told me that those only scratch the surface of the issue. “When there’s a food pantry, there’s somebody who is acknowledging the problem,” she says, but advocates have been fighting for a more systemic response.

The government can address this issue systemically through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, commonly known as food stamps), the report says, but it adds that “almost 2 million at-risk students”—defined as students who are low

information about student eligibility and share that information with its local offices.

Of course, the SNAP program is dependent on government funding, which makes it subject to budget cuts or unforeseen events such as the ongoing partial government shutdown. If the shutdown continues for a couple more weeks, SNAP may run out of funds for the 38 million Americans who receive its benefits.

Naturally, the report focuses heavily on low-income



income or first generation, are raising children, or have another, similar risk factor—didn’t receive SNAP benefits in 2016, even though they potentially could have.

That could be because those students didn’t know they were eligible: The government restricts students who attend college at least half-time from receiving the benefits, but certain students are exempt from that restriction. The information that most schools and SNAP offices provide students about the program is shoddy, says Samuel Chu, a national organizer for Mazon, an advocacy organization focused on eradicating hunger. “There are very specific ways and accessible ways that students can access SNAP,” he says, but even local SNAP offices are often unaware. For example, students who meet the basic criteria for SNAP eligibility and are younger than 18 or older than 50, or who have children, or who work a minimum of 20 hours a week are also eligible to receive the benefit. The GAO implored the Food and Nutrition Service, which administers SNAP, to improve

students, as they are perhaps those most likely to experience food insecurity. But Goldrick-Rab notes that they aren’t the only students who are going hungry. Middle-class students, those who are “too rich for Pell and too poor to afford college,” struggle as well. And they may not be as likely to use things such as the food pantry.

Murray told me that addressing food insecurity is one of her top priorities as Congress negotiates a reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, the major federal law governing colleges and universities. “Often we just talk about the tuition costs and dealing with that,” she says. “It has to be broader than that—[it has to be] all of the costs that come to a student as they try to complete college, including food and housing.”

Goldrick-Rab put it more bluntly. The report shows “that food insecurity is a college-completion issue,” she says. “We’re undermining our federal investment in financial aid by not paying attention to this. We have to stop pretending like living expenses are not educational expenses.”

PRO's Annual Luncheon and Membership Meeting



Back row: Nancy Koo, Helene Maxwell, Sue Chin, Joyce Lee, Toni Lesperance, Elaine Chen-Ramirez. Front row: Shirley Coaston, Myrtle Bennett, Yvonne Lawrence.



Alice Marez, Alex Pappas



Eddy Chandler, Don Chandler, Marge Maloney



Alice Marez, Jay Quesada, Linda Japzon



Kayla Lewis, Jennifer Shanoski



Nancy River, Kanika Parris, Connie Willis, Yvonne Price

Held on November 8 at the Fairview Metropolitan Banquet Center adjacent to the Oakland Airport. PRO Board member John Lodato organized the event with assistance from PRO Treasurer Anna Pavelka-Lodato. The Glen Pearson Ensemble played fabulous jazz throughout the afternoon.



Back row: Tom Southworth, Barbara Southworth, Sue Chin, Katherine Kocel. Front row: Jay Quesada, Linda Japzon, Rita Haberlin

Exploring the Dramatic Life of Wayne Collins

Staunch Defender of Japanese American Rights

By Jerry Herman

Rebel Lawyer: Wayne Collins and the Defense of Japanese American Rights

by Charles Wollenberg (Heyday Press 2018, 135 pages, \$20)

In this slim volume PRO member Chuck Wollenberg revisits one of the most heinous abridgments of civil liberties in American history: Franklin Delano Roosevelt's infamous Executive Order 9066 of February 1942, which ordered the removal of all people of Japanese descent from the West Coast and their evacuation to hastily and crudely built "relocation centers," virtual concentration camps in several Western states, there to be imprisoned for the duration of World War II.

Wollenberg's focus, as the title of the book indicates, is on Wayne Collins, the all but forgotten lawyer who became the dogged champion and unsung hero of the 120,000 Japanese-Americans who were interned. Wollenberg calls him "the most committed, consistent, and effective defender of the rights and liberties of the West Coast's Japanese American population." Collins' commitment did not end with the allies' victory over Japan in 1945, but stretched over 23 years until there was a final resolution to one of the four key cases that consumed him during the war and its aftermath.

Raised in San Francisco, Collins began his one-man general law practice in 1928. Although never a member of the in-group of the San Francisco legal establishment, he was a successful attorney. His dedication to civil liberties became evident in 1934 when he helped to organize the Northern California branch of the ACLU. His collaboration with the chapter's Executive Director Ernest Besig became the foundation of Collins' battles in defense of the rights of Japanese Americans in the 1940's and 50's. It may not be widely known that the National ACLU and the Northern California chapter clashed viciously over Executive Order 9066. The National ACLU supported it as a necessary evil for the war effort while the Northern California ACLU, with Besig and Collins in the lead, vehemently opposed it as an abrogation of constitutional rights. Because they

couldn't reconcile their bitter differences regarding 9066, the Northern California chapter split with the national organization, a rupture that lasted 25 years.

It was Besig who asked Collins, on behalf of the ACLU, to take on his first case dealing with Japanese American rights, *Korematsu v. United States*, perhaps the most well-known of the anti-9066 cases, thereby embarking Collins on a tireless two decade crusade to restore constitutional rights to Japanese Americans. His most famous single client was Iva Toguri D'Aquino, aka Tokyo Rose, accused of treason for her radio broadcasts to American troops in the Pacific during the war. Although she was initially convicted in a controversial trial, she was later exonerated of the charge and pardoned by President Gerald Ford.

In shedding essential light on this dark chapter of American history and the passionate advocate who championed principle over expediency, Wollenberg navigates the often complex and tangled issues and personalities with commendable clarity and authority. This highly readable narrative about Wayne Collins' contributions to the civil liberties of Japanese Americans admirably fills a historical gap by recognizing and recording Collins' heroic achievements. In his preface, Wollenberg establishes a contemporary lens from which to view Collins: "...he was a fearless defender of the nation's most important constitutional principles. Many of those principles are under attack today, making Collins' efforts in defense of civil rights and civil liberties all too relevant in the twenty-first century."

Rebel Lawyer won the 2018 California Historical Society's Book Award as the best book on California history of the year.

Historian Wollenberg is the author of several studies of California history including *Berkeley: A City in History*; *Golden Gate Metropolis: Perspectives on Bay Area History*; and *Marinship at War: Shipbuilding and Change in Wartime Sausalito*. He began his long Peralta career at Laney in 1964 but spent the bulk of his teaching years at Vista, later Berkeley City College, from which he retired in 2014.

(Jerry Herman was PRO's founding president, serving from 2004 to 2014.)

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

leges, cited the District for several financial problems both at Laney College and the District Office based on District mid-term reports. The viability of the OPEB Bonds are under scrutiny again. PRO representatives on the Retirement Board say reports to that Board suggest all is fine and they are perplexed by the ACCJC findings. In the meanwhile, Fran White, former Merritt College and PFT President, has been hired to help organize the District's response to the ACCJC concerns.

In addition, the PRO Board is aware that retiree pensions continue to be under attack both nationally and within California. So far, our retiree benefits are not threatened, but we will keep you posted on current court cases when we have relevant information.

PRO will continue to serve and inform its membership. Hopefully, all of you who understand that our collective voice is more potent than any individual will be sure to send in dues, recruit friends who are Peralta retirees who have not joined PRO, contribute to our scholarship fund or find some small or

large way to ensure that PRO remains strong in 2019.

IN MEMORIAM

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

**Lois Boggs
Barbara Cannon
Dolores Gerber
Bonnie Paull**

If you have any information about the passing or the serious illness of a Peralta retiree, please contact Helene Maxwell at:

*helenemaxwell3@gmail.com or by writing to PRO,
484 Lake Park Ave., #598, Oakland, CA 94610-2730*

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