



## **From the President...**

*by Jerry Herman, PRO President*

### **Fresno Retiree Crisis Comes To Trial**

FURA, the Fresno Unified Retirees' Association, has been in a brutal battle with the Fresno Unified School District since 2004 when the district unilaterally changed the retirees' lifetime health benefits by imposing a monthly fee. The Fresno retirees decided to fight, and it hasn't been easy and certainly hasn't been pretty. The case finally comes to trial on December 18 after the Fresno district has apparently exhausted its bag of tricks, which included trying to disqualify FURA's attorney, Bob Bezemek, from the case and bringing trivial motions to the court (all of which were dismissed) that were meant to stall the proceedings, possibly bankrupt FURA, and break the will of the Fresno retirees. To this point FURA has spent \$300,000 on the case (all of it raised by member voluntary contributions and donations from sympathetic organizations), and the Fresno District has spent \$5,000,000, according to FURA president Carole Sarkisian-Bonard.

I spoke with Carole about the case, and after five years she remains optimistic that FURA will prevail despite the frustrations and expenses. She knows that in Bezemek (also lawyer for the PFT) FURA has probably the best attorney in the state – if not the nation – in representing school retirees. The judge in the case has also indicated that FURA's evidence is strong.

The Fresno case has obvious implications for Peralta retirees. If FURA wins it will set a precedent that Peralta and other districts will challenge at their peril. The message: Don't you dare mess with our lifetime benefits. If FURA loses.....well, let's join in Carole's optimism for now. (If you are

*(Continued on page 4)*

### ***Plan to Attend ...***

## **PRO's Annual Membership Meeting**

**Wedgewood Banquet Center  
at  
Metropolitan Golf Links  
Oakland**

**Thursday  
November 12  
11 AM to 2 PM**

**See Details on Page 3**

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## WHAT ARE WE UP TO?

**RETIREE NEWS****Berkeley Honors Rafael Gonzalez**

The City of Berkeley has declared October 13 Rafael Jesus Gonzalez Day. Rafael taught in both the English and Mexican-Latin American Studies Departments at Laney College for over 30 years. He is being recognized for his lifetime of writing and art, cultural and political activism, and community service.

There will be a formal ceremony in his honor at the City Council meeting on October 13. The formal resolution includes recognition of Rafael's contributions as a teacher, artist and political activist. It cites his recognition by the National Council of Teachers of English, his leadership in organizing, and conducted the rituals for the annual Días de Muertos Community Celebration at the Oakland Museum of California, and his anti-war activism.

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**Peralta Retirees Organization**

PO Box 1951  
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<http://www.peraltaretirees.org>

President - Jerry Herman  
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Secretary - Ann Whitehead  
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Volume 6 Number 1

**Retirees Welcome at PCCD  
Benefits Fair on October 20**

By Jennifer Seibert

**Five Reasons To Come and Bring a Friend**1. Free informational workshops

"What every survivor and dependent should know about Peralta Benefits" 10 – 11

"Cancer Awareness – Stories of Survival; Are you getting your health checks?" 11 - noon

"Eldercare Services-How to care for a loved one in declining health" 1 - 2

2. Meet Benefit Dynamics Staff

Are you currently receiving reimbursements for Medicare premiums that you pay? Come pick up the new claim form or sign up for the convenience of direct deposit of your quarterly reimbursements. Starting with the first quarter 2010 reimbursements, all Medicare documentation must be attached to a claim form in order to be processed. Avoid delays! Ensure accuracy!

3. Meet representatives from Kaiser, Kaiser Senior Advantage, Coresource, Caremark & more!  
Pick up the most recent mail order reimbursement forms or ask service questions.

4. Visit with Peralta retirees Jay Quesada & Linda Japzon representing the Peralta Retirees Organization (PRO). They will staff the PRO table for the 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive year. Come say a friendly hello over coffee.

5. Discover other upcoming fun, discount and/or consumer opportunities available to the Peralta community. So far this year, we have cruised together and picnicked together. There is so much more to do to stay connected! Did you know the District is sponsoring a Reno Fun Train, February 19 – 21 for \$329 per person? Interested? Contact Herb Kitchen, Marketing Department at 510.466.7222 for more information.

**Tuesday, October 20, 10 AM–4 PM**

# PRO's Annual Luncheon and Membership Meeting

## 'Luau Luncheon'

Come join us and get in the Aloha spirit. Polynesian attire welcome.

**Thursday, November 12**

<b>Social Hour</b>	<b>11 AM—12 PM (No Host Bar)</b>
<b>Buffet Luncheon</b>	<b>12 PM—1 PM (\$18/PERSON)</b>
<b>Business Meeting</b>	<b>1 PM—2 PM</b>

Featuring the **Ben Luis Ensemble**  
and added surprise entertainment  
Door prizes and surprises

### Location

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

### Driving Directions

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

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

### Luncheon Reservations

Required by Sunday, Oct. 25.

**To reserve:** Send a check made out to 'PRO' for \$18 for each person in your party attending the luncheon. Mail your check to:

**PRO  
PO Box 1951  
El Cerrito, CA 94530**

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

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number Attending** \_\_\_\_\_

**Names of additional guests attending:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Total enclosed (\$18/person)**  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

(From The President Continued from page 1)

interested in finding out more about FURA's plight you can read the status report on the right or log onto its website: [www.fura-fusd.org/](http://www.fura-fusd.org/)).

### Jay Quesada Joins Pro Board

With the resignation of Odell Johnson from the PRO Board of Directors for personal reasons, the board approved the appointment of Jay Quesada to the board to serve the rest of the term. First, I'd like to thank Odell for his service. He was an effective Membership Committee Chair and always brought his good humor and enthusiasm to PRO meetings and events. We will miss him on the board.

Though I welcome Jay to her official seat on the PRO Board, she is hardly new to our meetings and activities. She is one half of PRO's dynamic duo, whose other member is Linda Japzon, also a board member. The two have done a great job co-chairing the Social Committee for three years always bringing their high energy and puckish sense of humor to any situation.

Jay worked on the classified staff at College of Alameda for 25 years. She's the mother of seven sons, grandmother to eight grandchildren, and great grandmother to eight more. She's been active in organizations such as the NAACP, La Raza and the PTA. A lover of jazz, she comes from a renowned musical family. (Pete Escovedo is her brother, Sheila E her niece.) She calls herself "a very social and fun-loving person." We on the PRO Board can verify that!

### Richard Bidleman Takes Over Database Task

Maintaining the database for an organization is one of those thankless, behind the scenes, activities that requires both good organizational skills and technical prowess. When PRO was established we were fortunate to have Don and Juanita Peterson set up and then maintain our database. After Juanita retired from the Board, Ann Whitehead took over. Now Richard Bidleman is assuming this important responsibility. Richard was a CIS and Business in-

## FURA Status Update

By Bruce Jacobs

*Over thirty years ago, Fresno Unified School District's unions negotiated retiree health benefits for the employees of the District. The District agreed to provide retirees with health insurance benefits at no cost after the age of 57 1/2. In 2005 the District broke its promise, and began charging its 3500 retirees hundreds of thousands of dollars each year in premiums. FURA hired Bob Bezemek to sue the District for the restoration of retirees' rights. Below is an update on the status of the legal situation.*

On August 26 of this year, the Superior Court granted FURA's Motion for Class Certification, rejecting the District's opposition. In its order the court approved the definition of the class, appointed class representatives, and ordered FURA and the District to confer on how best to notify class members of the ruling and other matters. This means that the FURA lawsuit is now a class action lawsuit so that each individual retiree does not have to separately sue the District.

On August 31, FURA's attorney filed a Motion for Writ of Mandamus, asking the Court to order the restoration of promised, lifetime benefits without premiums or fees. The evidence submitted with the Motion included statements from former superintendents, former district and union negotiators, recruiters, employees who conducted orientations or processed retirements, and others. The motion makes reference to District statements during a PERB Fact-Finding Process to the effect that Fresno's compensation included the promise of fully paid health benefits for retired employees, their spouses and dependents for life. The trial is set for December 18.

structor at COA before he retired and is now residing in Hawaii. With the wonders of modern technology Richard is keeping everyone's information current, keeping track of membership expiration dates, and producing the mailing labels for the newsletter.

## **Scenes From the 2009 PRO Picnic**



*Alex Pappas and Ida Pound*



*Anna Pavelka Lodato and Susan Chin*



*John Lodato and Roger Ferragallo*



*Alice Marez and Jay Quesada*



*Boris Gregory and Russ Gregory*



*Judy Thomas and Jack Mooradian*

**(Retiree News** *Continued from page 2)*

The meeting is open to the public and starts at 7 PM in the City Council Chambers at 2134 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way.

**Ferragallo Art Selected by Jury**

In the last issue of *The Peralta Retiree* we reported on Roger Ferragallo's cutting edge digital art. As an update, three of Roger's digital prints have been selected by a jury to appear in the prestigious 11th international digital print exhibition **Digital '09: Mysteries in Science** to be held at the New York Hall of Science from October 3, 2009 – January 31, 2010. This annual project is organized by Art & Science Collaborations, Inc. (ASCI). You can view the three works as well as the rest of the exhibition online at <http://www.asci.org/index2.php?artikel=1052>.

*Are you doing something that would interest your fellow retirees? Publishing a book? Having an art exhibit? Winning an award? Is there is a public event where you will be honored that you want to publicize? You can let PRO know by submitting information by email to [webmaster@peraltaretirees.org](mailto:webmaster@peraltaretirees.org) or by US mail to the PRO PO Box (PRO, PO Box 1951, El Cerrito CA 94530). We'll try to put the info in the next newsletter and/or in a special email to members.*

**PRO Book Drive Suspended**

Sondra Neiman, Chair of the PRO Service Committee reports that the annual PRO Book Drive will be suspended due to lack of current interest on the part of the Peralta libraries. If you were planning to bring books or magazines to the Annual Membership Meeting this November, you can try to personally contact the libraries and make arrangements to deliver the books yourself. Thank you for your past participation in this PRO activity.

**Renew Your  
PRO Membership for  
2010  
See info on Page 8**

**Nominations Open for PRO Board**

PRO's bylaws require that the membership elect five Board members this year. Those seats are currently held by Remo Arancio, Pat England, Sondra Neiman, Alex Pappas and Jay Quesada. Nominations for those seats are officially open. They will close at the Annual Membership Meeting which is scheduled for Thursday, November 12 (see page 3 for details). You can nominate a PRO member to run for a place on the Board by submitting his/her name by US mail to the PRO PO Box or by email to [webmaster@peraltaretirees.org](mailto:webmaster@peraltaretirees.org). Nominations must be received by November 12. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor at the Annual Membership Meeting. Please verify prior to submitting the nomination that anyone you nominate is willing to serve.

The Board usually meets on the first Wednesday of each month in Oakland.

**Memorial Service for Norbert Bischof**

There will be a memorial service for Norbert Bischof on Sunday, October 11 at 2:30 PM at the Unitarian Universalist Church. The church is located at 1 Lawson Road in Kensington.

Norbert passed away on August 29. He served as Faculty Senate President of Merritt College for many years and also served as President of the District Academic Senate a number of times. He played a major role in establishing the State Academic Senate and was a crucial player in the passage of the community college reform law AB1725.

**Peralta Retiree Ailing**

Peralta retiree Claire Barankin Wasser has late stage Parkinson's disease. She is in a hospice and would appreciate hearing from former colleagues. If you worked with Claire and would like to be in touch, you can write to her at:

Paradise Gardens II  
197 Los Cerros Avenue  
Walnut Creek CA 94598

## 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, PO Box 1951, El Cerrito, CA 94530

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

### Contributions Received for the PRO Scholarship Fund

In Memory of	Contributor
Richard Masato Aoki	Susan Chin
Norbert Bischof	Ida Pound
Jerry Healey	Helen Bersie and Chris Hadley
Jerry Healey	Susan Chin
Inez Townsend	Rose Hong
Inez Townsend	Siu Joe
Inez Townsend	Olga Radosevich

### ***IN MEMORIAM***

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

**Pat Batausa**  
**Norbert Bischof**  
**Bess Earp**  
**Ernest (Ernie) Gouveia**  
**Inez Townsend**  
**Dick Wagner**

*If you have any information about the passing or the serious illness of a Peralta retiree, please contact Bruce Jacobs at: [webmaster@peraltaretirees.org](mailto:webmaster@peraltaretirees.org) or by writing to PRO, PO Box 1951, El Cerrito CA 94530.*

## **It's Time To Renew Your PRO Membership for 2010**

**Please renew your PRO membership for 2010 if you have not already done so. If you are not sure whether you are paid up for 2010, please check the mailing label on this newsletter to see when your membership expires.**

**Dues are: \$20-1 year, \$55-3 years, \$80-5 years, and \$250-lifetime.**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email** \_\_\_\_\_

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