

Staying Connected

PCC Retirees Association

Oct 2010

Pat Savoie Volunteers in Tanzania

By Pat Savoie

After thinking about it for years, I finally signed up for a four-week stint with Global Volunteers to help teach English in Tanzania, Africa. What a great experience it was. Global Volunteers, with headquarters in St. Paul, is not associated with any political or religious group and has volunteer programs all over the world. However, the school I was assigned to in Pommern was run by The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania. Wow—in such a foreign, distant place and yet not so far from my roots.

On arriving in Dar-es-Salaam, I met the three other women volunteers (three of us teachers, one a nurse) and our Team Leader, the Tanzanian Country Manager, Edward Mgeni and Mohamed Kassim, our Driver.

The next morning on our way Iringa we passed through Mikumi National Park, where baboons stared at us from the side of the road, an elephant held up traffic, and lots of wildlife seemed unconcerned about the invasion of people and cars. In Iringa we got our last shot at the internet and spent a comfortable night at the ELCT Church and Hospice.

Pommern, not on any map I have seen, is only about 35 miles from Iringa, but it took us about two very bumpy hours to get there. The village consists of two boarding schools and clusters of red adobe houses and fields of grain and corn, all tended to by hand. The earth was deep red and the grass and trees a brilliant emerald green. The women often carried a plastic pail balanced on their heads, a baby slung in a wrap on their backs, and a toddler or another young child following along.

All were dressed in the amazingly colorful African patterned fabric. All the people were black, black. No shades of brown in this area. And their great smiles and beautiful eyes always offered a warm greeting. Their slim bodies and the elegant bone structure of their faces reminded me of Kobe Bryant.

The secondary school I worked in had students whose ages varied from 14 to 20 years old depending on their previous preparation. I worked with a nice young man who was a very competent and dedicated teacher, but he had some serious handicaps.

One class of 43 students and another of 52 had five textbooks, which the teacher plucked from the “library” and dispersed among the students, then read and discussed a short chapter as 10 to 12 students clustered around each book.

After class, books were collected and marched back to the library. The students were eager and pleasant, wore school uniforms, lived in dormitories (think summer camp) and every day ate the same menu of a porridge (igali) and beans cooked in huge barrels over a fire.

We volunteers lived in what had been the Mission House—quite nice though run down. We brought our own bedding, pillow, etc. We had running water, but no hot water, and almost every night the generator turned the lights on from 7-10 p.m. Mama Toni (a woman gets her first son's name) cooked simple but good food over an open fire and on her newly bought hot plate.

We had a really pleasant group and a very nice Director. We volunteers got to take a Safari on our own one weekend to Ruaha National Park—two days seeing herds of zebras, giraffes, elephants, impala, some lions, baboons, and flocks of birds. Lovely.

Before the last week I got some sort of bug that sent me back to Iringa, where I visited the hospital and then spent my last few days in the Hospice teaching the preschoolers some songs. And I got to see some of the workings of a small city with variety of stores and people, some dressed like Europeans, most in the African mode, and even a few Maasai, always in their distinctive traditional dress, the men still carrying machetes, but the simplicity of the quiet and primitive countryside of Pommern was my favorite.

Before returning home I flew into exotic Zanzibar for a couple of days. Check out www.globalvolunteers.org. I had a beautiful experience in Tanzania and plan to sign up for more of their adventures.

Alan Lamson Goes Into the DMZ

By Alan Lamson

“You’re going into the DMZ. Isn’t that dangerous right now?”

It was true that tensions between the two Koreas had heightened considerably since a North Korean submarine had evidently sunk a Korean warship, Cheonan, and 46 sailors drowned after the ship went down. But I very much wanted to visit the DMZ and so did several others, including English Professor Jane Hallinger with whom I first visited Korea in 2007.

On that visit we had looked through telescopes into the DMZ and North Korea from a tourist observation point near the demilitarized zone, a strip of land about 2.5 miles wide and 160 miles long that has served as a buffer between North and South Korea since the end of the Korean war.

This time we received special permission to visit an elementary school (only 30 students) in the only inhabited village in the DMZ, Taesungdong, a farming village of about 300 people, all of whose families owned land in this area before the Korean War.

The villagers pay no federal taxes and are exempt from military service. The school had recently begun an electronic pen pal connection with 4th grade classes at Polytechnic elementary in Pasadena.

Jane Soloway, who started the pen pal connection, asked us if we could distribute T-shirts from Poly for the students at the school.

The day of our visit, June 25th, was full of surprises. Before visiting Korea, I had asked Ms. Moon, our contact with the city of Paju—now a Friendship City with Pasadena— if we could visit some of the ecological areas near the DMZ. Two members of our party, David and Janet Carle, retired forest rangers from the Mono Lake area, are working on a book about water resources, on the 38th parallel, which happens to be the exact location of the DMZ.

Ms. Moon arranged to have us met by a young college student, Jung Rok An, and his father who have started a DMZ Ecology Research Institute to teach high school students about the special flora and fauna in the DMZ, an area that has been mostly uninhabited for nearly 60 years.

They met us at our hotel and drove us into the Civilian Control Area where there are a few farms but not many people.

One of the places we stopped at is the site of an annual eagle migration from Siberia and Mongolia during the winter months. Several thousand eagles nest in this wetland area of the Jangdan Peninsula.

I asked Jung Rok An how that many eagles were able to survive in this area. He said that the eagles feast on the entrails of slaughtered pigs that the locals leave for them. No wonder they continue to spend their winters here. Cranes, geese and wild ducks also winter in the area.

But a disturbing trend in the area has been the proliferation of ginseng farms because ginseng is a very profitable crop. The problem is that ginseng plants are protected from the sun with shade cloth that discourages migrating birds from landing. In certain areas, we saw acres of ominous looking black shade cloth.

The pristine ecological areas we visited are also scarred by miles of barbed wire and observation posts, one of which we visited. Observation Post #1, the first of scores of military observation posts line the entire length of the DMZ. Soldiers constantly scan the Imjin River and beyond for signs of any activity by North Korea.

It was at this observation post that Julia Kim took a photo of a white crane framed by the ubiquitous barbed wire. Julia is PCC student who is spending her summer as an intern at a ceramics museum in the Heyri Art Valley in Paju.

Another surprise was the opening of a dental clinic, sponsored by Dr. Yung Nam from Glendale, at Gunnae elementary school, a small school of about 50 students in the Civil Control Area. Dr. Nam had been trying for months to get permission to open his clinic at Taesungdong Elementary in the DMZ but neither the United Nations nor North Korea would give permission— for security reasons they said.

But Dr. Nam persisted and was able to get the support of a local dental group to help set up his clinic; all this accomplished in just one week. As part of the open celebrations, we were entertained by students playing classical music on odd-looking wind instruments that looked like oversized flutes.

Finally, we arrived at Taesungdong School in the early afternoon of June 25, a special day for all Koreans since it marks the beginning of the Korean War, and this year is the 60th anniversary of the war.

Before arriving at the school, we were stopped at two check points where our passports were collected and perused one more time.

At our final checkpoint, an armed Korean soldier, who spoke excellent English, having gone to school in the U.S., boarded our van and escorted us to the school; he remained with us during our time there.

Soon after we were introduced to the principal and some of the teachers, including a young American from Wisconsin, Nicole, who taught English at the school.

Then came the treat of the day, a spirited drum performance by most of the students at the school. We gave the students a standing ovation and then distributed "Panther" T-shirts donated by Polytechnic school. After leaving the school we posed for pictures near the huge South Korean flag that dominates Taesungdong village and looked across at the much taller North Korean flag about 400 meters away.

Someone asked the soldier if this spot was dangerous. He replied, "They can shoot you from this distance." I instinctively moved back a couple of steps. How ironic the mention of shooting in this peaceful farming village where the children study, play drums, go on skiing and hiking holidays, and send information about themselves to their new friends in Pasadena.

Did a Beautiful Woman Really Convince Harry Kawahara To Retire from PCC?

In our last edition of "Staying Connected," Fay Chandler, formerly of the English Division, wrote an intriguing article about some unique experiences she had in the classroom at PCC. She also mentioned one special humorous moment while teaching English in Romania, after her retirement. I recall being entertained by recollections of her adventures.

It occurred to me that with the large number of PCC retirees, there must be an abundance of episodes we could share with each other, from our years of service in the classroom or in our different campus work locations that would be of interest to others.

Let me tell you one of mine. I shared this at the year-end Academic Senate Breakfast upon my retirement in 2005. “I believe I can tell exactly when I decided it was time to retire. Shortly before actually retiring, I was reading the Los Angeles Times and noticed the photo of a very attractive Asian woman with a glittery crown on her head. The caption said she was Miss Thailand Universe—the most beautiful woman in the entire universe. Then I read the article about her and it stated that she was once an international student at PCC. I was amazed.

Out of curiosity, we went back to our appointment logs, since we keep those for our international students. Lo and behold, it turned out that I was the counselor who had the most contact with her. And you know what? Unbelievably, I could not remember her. The most beautiful woman in the whole universe and I could not recall her.

Now this is not Miss Glendale or Miss Long Beach, this was the most beautiful woman in the entire galaxy. Can you believe that? Right then and there I said to myself, Harry, you are well over the hill and you need to think seriously about your retirement.”

And sure enough, I did retire. It was a great decision. I thoroughly enjoyed my work at PCC and derived a lot of satisfaction from my service, but now that I am retired, I can say without reservation that I am delighted to be retired.

Please think back to your days on campus. Surely there must be incidents that happened to you that would be of interest to us. Consider the thousands of human interactions we had daily with colleagues and contacts with our myriad of diverse students with a wide array of fascinating backgrounds.

Think of it as a sharing of “family stories” within the larger PCC family. Please give this some serious thought.

Don’t be shy; write up something and submit it to Mikki Bolliger, our newsletter editor. Send your story to Pasadena City College, Retirees’ Association, 1570 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, CA 91106.

I was also very pleased to learn that Bill Goldmann was recently recognized by the California Retired Teachers Association for his excellent service over the years as its legislative chair.

The tribute stated that “at the local, state and national levels, we have all benefitted from his extraordinary depth of knowledge about educational issues and his ability to analyze and communicate complex issues in an understandable manner.” Indeed, it is an award that is well-deserved.

Bill has been a valued mentor to me since our time together at PCC. He was an exceptional administrator, and was a superb political science professor. His classes were always filled to capacity with students wanting to sit under his informative and insightful tutelage.

He has also been a most active community volunteer. He served as President of PLAN (Pasadena Literary Action Network), on the Board of the Pasadena Art League, President of Union Station (which serves the homeless), the Board of Five Acres (which serves abused children), President of the Salvation Army Board and, of course, President the PCC Retirement Association.

We are honored and privileged to be friends and colleagues of this first-class gentleman.

An 'Easy Walk' Into Eaton Canyon Turned Out To Be A Lot More Challenging Than Expected

By Mikki Bolliger

My lungs were burning as I tried to take in enough air to walk the final 20 yards to reach our destination. The muscles in my legs throbbed as I struggled to simply place one foot in front of the other. I had to keep going; there was no other choice. Turning around was out of the question, so I had to push forward because I knew there had to be a place to rest if I could just make it around the next bend.

Trudging ahead of me were five other brave souls with sweat pouring down their faces as they made the last push to reach Bruce Carter's cabin deep in Eaton Canyon. Dick Chamberlain, Harry Kawahara, Mike Riherd, Hollis Stewart and my husband, Dave Bolliger, figured that the cabin trip sounded like a pleasant way to spend an afternoon. However, by the end of the day, all of us would definitely use other adjectives to describe our adventure.

"It's an easy mile and a half walk," I remember Bruce saying when he issued his invitation for the retirees' board to meet for lunch at his cabin. Even though I knew I was not in the best shape, I certainly could make an "easy mile and a half walk." What I learned on this adventure was that Bruce and I have very different definitions for the word "easy."

It wasn't long after we started our hike that we realized this wasn't going to be an easy walk. The rock-strewn path was uneven as it wound down into the canyon. "A mile and a half!" Surely we went further than that in the last hour. I guess not. There was plenty of beautiful scenery, but no cabins indicating we were anywhere close to our goal. We all started speculating that the distance Bruce gave us was as the crow flies. If that were the case, we had a lot more walking to do.

And walk we did. We walked and walked and WALKED. Finally someone said the cabin was around the next turn. Thank God! I had visions of lying on the path until someone could flag down a helicopter to air lift me out. Just a little further! The last hurdle was to cross over a stream on an unsteady board before we could finally rest. Completely exhausted, I had to summon every ounce of strength to balance on that board and

make it over the stream. Whew! We made it. What a harrowing experience! As I was congratulating myself for making it to the cabin, I was stuck by a horrible realization—we had just walked DOWN into that canyon. Somehow we had to return to the top.

Bruce was waiting for us as we crossed over to his property. We all made for the cabin and plopped into the waiting chairs. I don't know about the others, but it took my breathing 15 minutes to return to normal. Bruce filled us in on the history of the area before serving lunch. We enjoyed hot dogs that we roasted on sticks in the fireplace and chili that Bruce had prepared. Bruce's wife Kathy baked some delicious cookies that we gobbled up. Everything was delicious.

While we were relaxing after the meal, people started making comments about the trip back. We even joked about trying to get airlifted out. They were kidding; I wasn't.

Believe me, I would have given anything if I could have waited for the weekly mule train to lumber up the steep trail with me plopped on top of one of those sure-footed animals. Bruce informed me that the mule train owners charge by the pound. I didn't care if they charged by the ounce, I was busy calculating how big a hit our retirement account would take if I negotiated a deal. Then Bruce gave me the bad news—the mule train only carries goods not people. There was no choice but to hike out.

After saying our goodbyes, we hit the trail and this time we trudged uphill. I told the others to walk at their own pace and not worry to that I was lagging behind. Believe me, this was not how I visualized this adventure. Why hasn't anyone thought of having oxygen stations along this steep, winding trail?

Although my husband preferred to walk faster, he felt guilty about leaving me behind. So instead, he decided it was his duty to encourage me. "Come on, keep going, you're doing fine. Don't stop; just keep moving." Was he kidding! I was planning to lie down and die, and he was telling me I was doing fine.

I kept looking up, hoping for a glimpse of the lot where we parked the car, but all I could see was that path going straight up. I couldn't help thinking of those people who decided to hike down into the Grand Canyon only to realize like I had earlier that they had to get back to the top somehow.

Yes, I finally made it to the top, but I thought I was going to die from exhaustion. The men made it up a lot faster than I did. If you ask them about the trip, they probably wouldn't describe it the same way. However, we do agree on one thing—it really was quite an adventure. And I know one thing for certain—if I want to enjoy Eaton Canyon again, I'll just look at my pictures.

**California Retired Teachers' Association Honors Bill
Goldmann With Top Award**

The 53,000 member California Retired Teachers Association recently honored Bill Goldmann with its highest award. Known as the Ruth Q de Prida award, it is given annually to a retired teacher who has been heavily involved with legislation affecting retired teachers and an individual who has contributed to various community service organizations.

Following his retirement from Pasadena City College, Bill served as District Director for the 44th Assembly District for Assembly member Dr. Jack Scott. Subsequently, Bill served as legislative representative for Division One of the CalRTA, and in that capacity gave progress reports at every bi-monthly luncheon and authored a column in each issue of "Chalk Talk."

He went on to become the legislative representative for Area Eight. He served on the 12- member state legislative board which developed legislative policy for the CalRTA. During this time he also presided over numerous legislative seminars regarding issues of interest to retired teachers.

In the last 30 years Bill served as president of PLAN, (the Pasadena Literacy Action Network) which was founded to expand literacy programs in the area primarily through fundraising and other activities. He served on the Salvation Army Board (Pasadena) and eventually became its president. Bill a board member of Five Acres and chaired its Advocacy Committee. He was recently selected as "Volunteer of the Year Award" for Five Acres.

In addition, he was president of the board of Union Station Homeless Services. He also served three terms as president of the Pasadena City College Retirees' Association Board. He continues to serve as a consultant to that group.

Bill recently turned 82 and still serves as a member of the Advocacy Committee for Five Acres and as a member of the Government Relations Committee for Union Station Homeless Services. He has served on the board of the Jeanne Ward Foundation for the past 20 years. He and was recently selected to serve as Grants Chairperson for the Pasadena Arts League.

Congratulations Bill for you exceptional service not only on behalf of retired teachers but to the entire Pasadena community.

Write to Us; We're Waiting

If you enjoy reading about the trips of other retirees, you can bet everyone would like to hear about your travels. If you haven't been traveling, how about letting everyone know what you are doing these days. Sometimes we lose track of our friends after they've retired, so it's always nice to find out what's keeping them busy.

You can send a typed copy to Mikki Bolliger c/o PCC Retirees Association, 1570 E. Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena, CA 91106 or you can e-mail your story and photos to Mikki Bolliger at MRBolliger@pasadena.edu.

We are waiting to hear from you. We'll be checking the mailbox every day.

Retirees Invited on Theatre in London Trip

If you're tired of staying home, and you've been thinking about planning an exciting getaway, PCC's Theatre in London trip might be just what you are looking for. Retirees have been invited to join trip leaders Joe Sierra and Amy Ulmer for a first-class adventure in London from April 15-24, 2011.

The excursion includes eight nights at the 4-star Thistle Marble Arch near Hyde Park with daily continental breakfast. Participants will get to see four plays, tour the Old Globe theatre in London, and take a day trip to Canterbury Cathedral and Dover Castle.

The \$2,940 cost includes the round-trip flight on Virgin Atlantic, round trip airport transportation in London, a seven-day transportation pass for the London tube/bus. (Singles will have to pay an \$800 supplement.)

If you have never been to London, or if you've always wanted to return, this trip makes it easy to enjoy exploring the city and its environs. You will have plenty of free time to visit the British Museum, Westminster Abbey, The Houses of Parliament, Harrods and anything else you have been longing to see.

If you are interested in joining the PCC group, you need to contact either Joe or Amy and let them know as soon as possible. You can e-mail Amy at Axulmer@pasadena.edu or call her at (828) 585-7371. Joe can be reached at Jxsierra@pasadena.edu or by calling (626) 585-7230.

Mike Bloebaum Tells About Life in Grass Valley

Things are going well up here in Grass Valley. I have returned to my original profession and passion of filmmaking. If you want to see what types of things we are doing, you can check out MB2 Communications' web site.

I recently did a half hour film on the joy of singing called "The Singing Life" featuring the world-famous men's ensemble Chanticleer which was syndicated around PBS— including KQED. As a result, Chanticleer hired us to do a DVD that accompanies their latest CD "Mission Road."

I have also just completed a one hour film that profiles five young people in our community to whom music is their life. It is called "My Musical Life" (are you getting a theme here?).

I'm on the Board of Directors of Music in the Mountains, an organization that presents great music festivals up here with a \$1 million plus budget. And I am head of the judging committee for the Wild and Scenic Film Festival in Nevada City. That is Grass Valley's twin, just three miles away. And my wife Margaret and I sing in the Sacramento Choral Society and Orchestra, which did a concert tour of China a couple of years ago.

We're coming down to Los Angeles to take possession of a tiny studio condo we bought in a converted downtown office building, We come down so often, we're tired of being guests (For those who don't know much about Mike's background, he had a very successful professional life before coming to PCC to serve as Dean of the Communications Division.

He wrote hundreds of documentaries, and he also co-produced a National Geographic special for PBS which won five Emmy Awards.)

It is nice to hear from retirees who let us all know that there really is life after PCC.

In Memoriam

Spanish Instructor Virginia McCready Passes Away

Virginia McCready passed away on May 10 in Carlsbad, California. She grew up in Topeka, Kansas — the oldest of three children. She graduated from the University of Iowa.

She held various occupations prior to marrying Jack McCready in 1957. When Jack died in 1960, she returned to Topeka to earn a degree at Kansas University.

In 1964, she moved to Pasadena to begin teaching Spanish at PCC, and that is where she stayed until she retired in 1992. After leaving PCC, she worked as a residential real estate broker for more than a decade. In 2007, she moved to Carlsbad to be closer to her son Patrick and his family.

Virginia was a patron of the arts, and she was particularly fond of opera. She was also an avid walker. The family suggested that memorial contributions could be made to the Alzheimers Association— San Diego/Imperial Valley chapter or the St. Vincent DePaul Society c/o St. Philip the Apostle Church in Pasadena.

Remembering Allen Davis

By Jo Ann Lee

Allen Davis, who retired from PCC in 1983 after 33 years, passed away on June 22 after a brief illness. He was 88.

Born in Los Angeles, Allen earned his MBA from UCLA and taught accounting in the Business and Computer Technology Department from 1950 to 1983. He authored a typewriting keyboard skills workbook that was widely received by students because the games and exercises were not only fun and interesting but also instructional. Several schools adopted the workbook.

Allen and his wife Virginia enjoyed boating and retired to Newport Beach to pursue their favorite pastime. His love of people was shown through his various volunteer activities: delivering Meals on Wheels for 14 years; entertaining as a clown to hospitalized children; doing stand-up comedy as the Judge and the Professor (accompanied by a friend who played the piano), at churches and senior citizen centers. (Allen attended clown school to hone the knee-slapping humor that delighted his former colleagues.)

He was honored by the Los Angeles Dodgers and KTLATV for his volunteer work. He strongly believed laughter was the best medicine and loved adding to his large repertoire of jokes through the years.

Besides his wife of 64 years, Allen leaves two children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. Allen's good humor and laughter, friendship, generosity, and many kindnesses over the years will be missed!

Judy Fogle Dies

Judy Fogle who taught German at PCC until her retirement passed away. Judy was well known on campus because she was actively involved in the Academic Senate, serving on numerous committees and subcommittees.

Judy had the distinction of being the only full-time German instructor at for her entire 22 years at Pasadena City College.

Carlen Friesen Died on July 4

Carlen Friesen was a familiar face on campus. He could be seen riding in his maintenance cart as he moved from job to job. A WWII Vet, Carlen died on July 4, 2010 at the age of 85.

Carlen began his career at PCC in 1978 as a custodian. He quickly became a skilled Trades Worker. Carlen retired from the college in 1996, and at that time he was performing skilled and semi-skilled building maintenance.

Debbie Baisley and Her Furry Friend Anthony

When people recall Debbie Baisley, they can't help but remember her along with her trusty Assistance Dog, Anthony.

Debbie began working for the college in 1977 in the Admissions and Records Office. She worked in various positions in that department until she retired in 1997 due to her disability.

Anyone who dealt with Debbie during her time at PCC will remember her friendly efficiency and her loyal helper Anthony sleeping under her desk or walking beside her wheel chair.

Debbie was crushed when Anthony died, but people who believe there are dogs in heaven know for certain that Debbie and Anthony will be together again.

Samuel LaMothe Loved Students

Samuel La Mothe started out at PCC as a student then a graduate of the Dental Laboratory Technology Program in the early 1980s. He served as a classroom-based tutor and was later hired as the Department Technician for the Dental Lab Technology Program.

Samuel was a dedicated member of the staff until he retired in 2000. Anita Bobich said, "Samuel was a lovely human being who loved working at the college and truly enjoyed helping our students in his very special way." His dedication to students, faculty and the college was reflected in his care for the laboratory and in the way he served the students.

Samuel passed away in May, 2010.

Elaine Broerman Passes Away

Elaine Broerman began her career at PCC in Admissions and Records in 1965. She moved up the ladder and become Assistant Director of Development within the External Relations department. She remained in that position until she retired in 1998.

People remember Elaine for her happy disposition. Whenever you saw her on campus, she was smiling.

Anyone interested in making a memorial contribution in Elaine's name should send a donation to the Convalescent Aid Society in Pasadena.

CalPers and CalStrs Update for Retirees

By Hollis Stewart

The PCC Retirees' Association Board heard some good news and not so good news at its last meeting when Hollis Stewart and Bill Goldmann reported on the two retirement funds that affect current employees as well as PCC retirees—CalSTRS and CalPERS.

Anyone following the woes of the two retirement funds in the media have to be wondering whether the money they count on is going to run out.

The very good news for retirees drawing pensions and other benefits from CalSTRS and CalPERS— your pensions from both funds are secure now and well into the future. Not only are both funds recovering from the losses they suffered during the recession, but any future problems are contractually covered by the State of California.

This means that you and I do not have to worry about our pensions but we do need to be active to protect current and future educational employees and other public workers so that they can have a future without poverty after they retire.

The CalSTRS fund, the money that pays our benefits and earns money to keep on paying, stood at \$129 billion on June 30, 2010 and it grew at a rate of approximately 7% the first half of the year and is expected to do that as well or better in the second half. This would suggest that CalSTRS ought to have about \$134 billion at the end of this year. CalPERS had a mid-year fund of \$200 billion and a growth rate for the fiscal year to date of 11.60%. CalPERS ought to end up with a fund of about \$208-9 billion at year's end. At the fund's lowest point in June 2009, the CalPERS investments had dropped to \$181 billion from a high of \$253 billion on Dec. 31, 2007.

Rob Feckner, the president of the CalPERS Board, said at a meeting that I attended in May, "Your retirement is SAFE and SECURE. We can weather downturns and come out ahead in the long run." So, we can rest easy but we still have work to do.

The work he refers to is keeping an eye on Marcia Fritz and her colleagues at the California Foundation for Fiscal Responsibility. They have given up for now on floating an initiative to amend the California Constitution and slash the public pensions that we have invested in for our working lives.

However, now they, along with their conservative business friends and politicians, are attempting to push through legislation to damage the retirement system. They hype stories about the problems in Bell, California and other places where seeming criminal conspiracies have been worked to draw excessive pensions through schemes that would make pyramid operators green with envy. They also love to push to have voters think that most pensioners receive \$100,000 or more per year. In fact those people represent only about 1% of all the retirees being paid by public pensions. The average CalPERS retiree draws about \$25,000 per year and over half draw \$16,000 or less per year.

Bill Goldman said that teachers retiring from CalSTRS would have an average higher than the CalPERS retirees, but they certainly weren't the ones making the big draws from the fund.

Those opposed to decent public pensions never mention that employees invest in the pension funds every pay check. To hear them tell it, you would think that taxpayers are paying full costs of the pensions and we just ride along like a tramp on a freight train, waiting for that big pie in the sky.

So, again we must be as active as possible in retirees' groups, senior centers, our churches and social clubs to inform people about what is really happening with public pensions and to urge them to contact their state legislative representatives to oppose any detrimental legislation aimed at Cal- STRS and CalPERS or any public employee pension funds.

Although current retirees are safe, this is still our fight because teachers and classified educational employees have always been in the forefront of efforts to build a better, more prosperous society where no one is forced to live in economic insecurity in old age.

Response Needed Now

Pasadena City College has a very poor institutional memory, and an inspection of the campus archives suggests that there is a lot of work to be done. To remedy this problem, the Human Resources department has prepared a questionnaire that will now be given to everyone retiring from the college. Well, that's fine for the future, but what about those who have already retired?

The Retirees' Association would like to offer you the chance to have your contributions noted in the college archives. (Below is the information that will be filled out by retiring employees.) Please take the time to respond to items 1-3 listed below. Send your responses to the Pasadena City College Retirees' Association, 1570 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena 91106. Those of you who prefer to respond online can check out the Human Resource department on the PCC website. There will be a link titled Retirees' form. Please be sure to respond.

Every employee who works at the college makes an impact on the students and the institution. Sometimes the contributions that you think are important may not be the ones acknowledged by the administration.

- We are interested in knowing what contributions you made during your time at PCC that you would like to see noted in the college's archives.
- What makes you the proudest when you think of the years you spent at PCC?
- What do you want people to say about you when they recall your service to the college?

Dr. Mark Rocha Named PCC President

Dr. Mark W. Rocha became the new superintendent-president of Pasadena City College in an official investiture ceremony on Sept 15. Dr. Rocha was selected to replace Dr. Lisa Sugimoto, who served in that position while the board of trustees conducted a search for a permanent president.

Although, Dr. Rocha began working on campus in July, the ceremony on Sept. 15 made it all official with the presentation of a special medallion struck for the occasion. Former presidents Dr. Jack Scott and Dr. Jim Kossler were on hand to offer their congratulations.

Dr. Rocha's appointment came after a nationwide search that included campus candidate forums, and meetings with campus and community groups. The board also solicited extensive input from faculty, staff, students and community members. After considering Dr. Rocha's extensive experience and his commitment to student success, the board said members were "highly impressed with Dr. Rocha's collegial teamwork approach at West Los Angeles College that resulted in great progress in the areas of enrollment, budget and external grants." The board voted unanimously to appoint him as PCC's new president.

Dr. Rocha has more than 20 years of experience in higher education, including nine years in the California community college system.

Most recently, he served as president of West Los Angeles College. He brings extensive experience working in a large, multi-college district.

The new president received his Ph. D in English from USC; his master's degree from Cal-State Fullerton, and his bachelor's degree from Villanova.

In 1993, Dr. Rocha was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship and taught for a year in Caracas, Venezuela at the Universidad Simon Bolivar.

U Building May Have to Be Torn Down

The U Building on campus may have to be torn down. A 2009 study evaluating the safety of campus buildings found that the building is not up to current earthquake standards.

Options include retrofitting the interior of the building or demolishing the structure. Because the building is not up to current code, it must be modified to be structurally sound.

The college considers the building safe for students and staff to occupy; however, the administration has to move as quickly as possible to transfer occupants to temporary facilities.

Dr. Mark Rocha, the college president, was quoted in the Courier saying, "It is reasonable to expect that we will be in the U Building doing business until the end of this academic year." He estimated that work would more than likely begin in the summer of 2011.

The college needs time to figure out where the different departments will be moved and to secure trailers to serve as temporary classrooms.