



ALAN WADE

President's Corner | Contemplating the Unthinkable

by Alan Wade

As everyone knows by now, the budget has been passed, based on more borrowing, delaying the inevitable reckoning. The impact in dollar terms on the CSU (and Sacramento State) is as yet unknown, and will have to unfold over the next few months. All that we know for certain is: this is the worst it has ever been. The overriding bad news about the national economy downgrades our concerns about the CSU to "small potatoes" status—to make matters even worse, our governor has just asked for a bailout from Washington to enable our state to meet its payroll. Stay tuned!

On September 10, I attended a forum on campus of the "Alliance for the CSU," aimed at focusing public attention on the current and long-term budget crisis affecting the California State University system. I represented our Association on your behalf.

Lots of data were provided for the consideration of the audience, which consisted of more than 100 including President Alexander Gonzalez, students, administrators, union members and others concerned with the future of Sacramento State and the CSU. We learned, for example, that more than 170,000 alums of our own campus live and work in the region—a powerful economic bulwark for our entire community. Despite the many economic benefits provided by the CSU, the nation's largest four year system of higher education, the governor's budget for the system proposes a \$289 million cut—with Sacramento State's share pegged at \$15 million. The effect of such deep cuts on California's capacity to serve a burgeoning population with an educated work force was spelled out in stark detail. A substantial increase in student fees will certainly follow.

Despite all we know about the economic and social value of an accessible public higher education system, there seems to be no escaping the CSU budget cuts in the new fiscal year—assuming that a budget of some sort will eventually be negotiated. Dismaying is the fact that any restorations in the proposed cuts would have to come from already badly underfinanced health and welfare programs, along with K-12 education.

At this moment (9/12/08), the state budget impasse is now in its 73rd day, with no immediate prospects for resolution. The governor proposes gimmicks and sleight of hand. Legislative leadership is anemic. The Democrats believe that further cuts would be disastrous for the most helpless among us, and the Republicans have taken a blood oath against any tax increases. Given the straitjacket of the 2/3 majority requirement to pass a budget, no one knows when the budget will be adopted. When and if it eventually is passed and signed into law, it is certain to be a deeply flawed compromise based on fuzzy economics. One might well ask: when the money runs out, what will happen?

The casual visitor to the campus cannot but feel a surreal sense of confidence that nothing has changed—business as usual is the word. However, if the treasury runs empty by November, will our campus and others in the CSU be forced to close doors? Will things really have to get so bad that large numbers of people actually experience life crises before the legislature and the governor can be prodded into action?

I raised that possibility at the Alliance meeting, and was told that, of course, such a scenario was unthinkable. But will the electorate ever really get the picture unless moved by drastic consequences with real impacts on the daily lives of millions? Is the actual shut-down of state services the only way to awaken Californians to the inconvenient truth that governmental services which we take for granted must actually be paid for?

The Alliance for the CSU can have little effect on the current budget negotiations. What the Alliance can do is gear up for a tough campaign over the next several years designed to educate the California public that we can't have everything we want. What we can have are the essential underpinnings of a free and civilized society including access to higher education—provided we are willing to pay for them. Admittedly, a tough sell.

Should our Association of emeritus faculty and retired staff take part in this long-term struggle? I believe we have a unique role to play. Let me know what you think. Visit the Alliance website at www.alliancefortheesu.org.

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Health Benefits Report

By David F. Humphers

CSU VOLUNTARY RETIREE VISION PLAN

The CSU Chancellor's office announced on August 28 that the implementation date for the new vision program is January 1, 2009. The CSU Voluntary Retiree Vision Program "will be administered by VSP for eligible California State University retirees and their dependents." The CSU announced that retirees will receive open enrollment information from VSP in October. The CSU announcement requests that retirees be patient "while we finalize details and prepare for the roll-out of this new benefit program." Before signing up for the Voluntary Retiree Vision Program, check with your health plan to determine what vision care services are already covered.

MEDICARE & YOU, 2008

The annual Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services booklet, *MEDICARE & YOU*, is mailed to retirees every year. We received the 2008 issue last December or January. A word of caution for those of you who are not enrolled with a HMO and are having difficulty finding a physician who accepts Medicare "assignment:" See especially page 35 of *MEDICARE & YOU*, 2008, for an outline of payment arrangements for providers who do not accept Medicare "assignment" and see page 36 for the warning: if you sign a "private contract" with a doctor or other health care provider who does not provide services through the Medicare program, Medicare will not pay any amount for services from this doctor; a Medigap policy will not pay for services from this provider. Signing the "private contract" means that you pay the entire bill.

RURAL SUBSIDY

The Rural Health Care Equity Program (Rural Subsidy) was established to provide reimbursement of health care expenses for state employees and annuitants who do not have access to a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO). The Rural Subsidy provides a supplement for the more expensive PPO health insurance in rural areas. The governor and legislative budget committee placed the Rural Subsidy on the chopping block. The termination will yield a saving of about \$13 millions. Over the past decade the number of HMO's accessible to CalPERS members has declined. Within the past year, CalPERS approved Blue Shield terminating their HMO in five rural California counties. The CSU-ERFA Executive Committee at the July 19 meeting adopted a resolution opposing termination of the Rural Subsidy. Don Cameron, CSU-ERFA Executive Director, notified each affected CSU-ERFA member by land mail and encouraged each one to contact a legislative representative to oppose the planned termination of the Rural Subsidy.



Travel Corner

By Peter Shattuck

A few years ago, Murray Work sent me a postcard: "Whatever you're doing, drop it at once and come here immediately!" It took a while, but Elizabeth and I finally made it to Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, and now I fully understand Murray's enthusiasm. Here is one of the most marvelous buildings in the world.

I bought a T-shirt with Gehry's original sketch for the museum. It's rough, almost abstract, but it contains the essence of the finished work. Words like "awesome" and "magnificent" seem inadequate. The titanium skin sparkles and darkens and reflects, never quite the same from minute to minute. The shapes and forms, now leaping, now crouching, create an impression of incredible tension and strength. Gehry won an argument over the site, and as a result, the building stands perfectly integrated into the Nervion River, at a former industrial site, symbolizing Bilbao's rebirth. A 1989 guidebook called the river "so polluted it sometimes looks as if it were literally made of milk and honey;" now it is as bright and clear as the reflection pools which flash between the water and the building's metal skin.

The museum's contents do not come up to their container. Most successful is a group of Richard Serra steel sculptures, huge and off balance and unsettling to walk through. Louise Bourgeois contributed one of her huge and strangely nurturing spiders. The star, so called, is Jeff Koons' massive "Puppy," fourteen feet high, covered with flowers, technologically marvelous—computerized systems for watering and fertilizing the flowered surface – but always, and inescapably, cute. Kitsch, anyone?

We walked and drove around Bilbao, charmed by its handsome apartment blocks, thrilled by the view from a hilltop park down onto the city center and the museum. We sat and toasted Murray – to say nothing of Frank Gehry – with glasses of tempranillo, and rejoiced in the chance to visit such an extraordinary achievement of human imagination. Whatever you're doing, drop it and go there at once.

Legislative Update

By Bob Bess

The best thing one can say about the budget situation is that the general level of frustration might convince state government that serious effort should be made to revise the process so that only a simple majority vote would be required for passage. At this writing, a budget was passed for the second time this week and the Governor has signed it. More than 800 bills have been passed and can now be submitted to the Governor. Among them are several bills of interest to PERS annuitants noted below that I anticipate will be signed.

The budget mess aside, there is more good news than bad to report. Former Assemblymember Keith Richman failed to qualify yet another initiative which would significantly reduce benefits for future retirees. The Governor's Commission on Post Employment benefits completed its work in January, and a handful of witnesses took the opportunity to slam current health and retirement programs. The Commission completed a thorough review of funding and management of these programs with an outcome indicating that, generally, they are in good shape. PERS' future obligations are virtually fully funded as are most local agency retirement programs. Health programs offered by some participating local agencies are on a pay-as-you-go basis. Recent legislation has enabled PERS to receive and manage funds from agencies that wish to pre-fund.

Two bills, SB 1123 and AB 1844, incorporate several Commission recommendations including steps to address cases of fraud more effectively and to establish various audit and reporting requirements. A related bill, AB 1296, was passed and signed earlier. It will require health plans to provide better information on claims and payments to service providers. This requirement is a major step in PERS' efforts to achieve greater transparency.

On the broader health front, little progress is evident. SB 840 authored by outgoing Senator Sheila Kuehl would establish a universal single payer health care system passed, but has been vetoed. Expect to see this bill return in the next

session. SB 235, which extends the State annuitant vision care program to CSU, passed and was signed by the Governor. You should be receiving information soon; a January implementation is anticipated. Based on limited information, this program appears unlikely to be attractive to most of us.

The surprise event of the session was AB 2940. It moved through the Assembly without difficulty, but died in Senate Appropriations. Its purpose was to enable PERS to establish IRA-type programs for both public and private sector employees. It was amended at least four times. Most retiree organizations took no position on the bill. The Retired Public Employees Association (RPEA) took an oppose position in early spring, and CSU-ERFA voted to oppose the bill in July. ERFA leadership expressed mixed views on the merits of the program, but agreed unanimously that the numerous amendments and rushed hearings justified opposition. Many members shared RPEA's concern that this could be the first step in greater private sector influence over PERS.

Meanwhile, a number of activities largely under the radar for most of us could have ramifications for all PERS annuitants down the line. Chief among these is a lawsuit filed by Orange County Supervisors which challenges the constitutionality of retroactive benefits. Also, several small public agencies are looking at modifying their retirement programs. Some could move in the direction of defined contribution programs. Watch for more information about this and related developments over the next year or so.

Finally, if you wish to keep informed about matters related to your benefits, I suggest that you check the CSU-ERFA website. Well maintained, the website provides new information several times each week. If you wish to get information about a particular bill, go to www.legislature.ca.gov, enter the bill number, and you will find current information about status as well as a history of actions taken. I welcome inquiries from Silver Bulletin readers who wish further information by e-mail (rbess@sbcglobal.net).

It is time to renew your membership

Membership Registration Form

Please make your check payable to "Sacramento State Emeritus Association" and mail it along with this form to:
Karyn Domich, Treasurer | 2912 Robinson Creek Lane | Elk Grove, CA 95758

Full name _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail address _____

I would like to begin renew membership.

Check One Box Faculty \$25 Life \$250 Out of area 75 mi. \$10
 Staff \$15 Life \$150 Out of area 75 mi. \$10



From the Editor

by Hortense Simmons

Atlanta Is Not Sacramento: On Becoming a Southern Belle aka “Georgia Peach”

About six months ago, I moved to Atlanta after having sold my home in mid-town Sacramento. Believe me, I am transitioning nicely into becoming a Southern Belle. The reality of my being a Florida native (I never returned south to live after leaving for college at age 18), is contributing to my transition. Of no small importance is the fact that two of my siblings and their clans live here, and my mom and a sister live in Florida.

I’d like to think that commonsense, not seduction, accounts for my having replaced my snug city town-home with this behemoth hidden within a forested acre and a half housing bugs and critters the likes of which I had conveniently forgotten since my youth in Florida.

You can be sure that Atlanta is not Sacramento, and Georgia is not California. Shall I compare “Georgia on My Mind” to “I Love You California?” A Cherokee rose to a golden poppy? A live oak to a redwood? A peach to a pluot? You get my thrust?

Just know that I am thriving in my new hometown, bugs and all. I’m enjoying the amenities of this fascinating city and its surrounding communities (festivals of all sorts, art walks, theatre, symphony, jazz, restaurants of all types), meeting new folk, and getting involved with the local Fulbright Association (one of the largest in our country). As a matter of fact, in a few weeks, I will be leaving to attend the National Fulbright Association Conference in Beijing. Those of you who know me well understand that living less than 15 minutes from the Atlanta airport is a definite plus.

Y’all come, okay?

In Memoriam

Frank L. Kaufman, *Management*, September 10, 2008

Jerry Dillon, *Computer Science*, August 15, 2008

Joel B. Knowles, *Management*, July 31, 2008

Nicholas A. Bond, Jr., *Psychology*, July 25, 2008

Bonnie Busick, *Theatre Arts*, June 22, 2008

Sharad J. Malelu, *Sociology*, June 21, 2008

Mario P. Pietralunga, *Foreign Languages*, June 1, 2008

Martin R. Brittan, *Biological Sciences*, May 24, 2008

Tom Gentry, *Music*, May 15, 2008

Lovanna Pettay, *Education*, April 13, 2008

John M. Lewis, *Music*, April 8, 2008

Chaille M. Love, *Biological Sciences*, March 20, 2008

Miguel E. Blanco, *Design*, March 15, 2008

Gaylen A. Hatton, *Music*, February 8, 2008

Ruth E. Doyle, *Family & Consumer Sciences*, January 3, 2008

For further details, please check our website:

www.csus.edu/emeritus

Staying Connected

Note from Editor Hortense Simmons: This issue, we are featuring two dynamic Sac State couples: Ken De Bow and Linda Palmer; John Shoka and Mary Braham. They are clearly living enjoyable, productive lives in retirement. Colleagues, staff and faculty alike, please remember that your Association is interested in learning about your retirement activities. I urge you to submit your stories to me—don’t forget to attach a photo. I am now seeking articles for the Spring Silver Bulletin.

John Shoka (Government) and Mary Braham (Nursing)



Having retired in 2005, John Shoka and Mary Braham, residents of Aptos, California are focusing their retirement efforts on Kishapu Community Development Center (KCDC), an international non-profit organization they founded in Tanzania, East Africa, John’s birthplace. The

Center started as a result of a visit by John in May 2007 to the village of Kishapu located in a rural area of northern Tanzania where he was born and raised.

To assess their problems and needs, John met with community members of Kishapu who identified the multiple problem areas of drought conditions, lack of clean water, diseases such as Malaria, HIV and water borne diseases, as well as lack of economic opportunities. From this meeting, the multi-faceted mission of KCDC was born: To increase the quality of life and well being of the community of Kishapu and other rural areas of Tanzania by (1) providing clean reliable water sources, (2) promoting public health, and (3) increasing occupational opportunities.

Since May 2007, the KCDC has been in contact with the village leaders in Kishapu. These leaders have agreed to allow KCDC to operate on family/tribal land (Kumbayu Farm) for the benefit of the community. The residents of Kishapu have agreed to participate in the decision-making process and contribute their resources to make the programs successful.

Summer 2008 has been a particularly busy and rewarding time for Mary and John who traveled to Kishapu to further their work at KCDC. Recognizing public health as one key to improving the quality of life for the people of Kishapu and malaria as the number one killer in Africa, John and Mary delivered 100 insecticide-treated malaria nets to the Kishapu Health Center to assist in the fight against malaria.

Access to adequate clean water is also key to improving the lives of the people in Kishapu. John and Mary worked with government water engineers in Shinyanga Region to survey the best way to provide an adequate supply of clean water to Kishapu. Two possible alternatives are 1) completing several wells for small villages of about 500 people each or 2) completing a large water supply system for the entire Kishapu area of about 16,000 people.

More surveys and analysis need to be completed to determine the feasibility of doing either one of these water projects.

A common criticism of charitable organizations and non-governmental organizations operating in developing countries is that many of these organizations operate only in major cities. Operations in rural areas are intermittent and sparse. KCDC plans to build a community center in the Kishapu. John and Mary worked with a local Tanzanian architect who drew up plans for a community center and a multipurpose hall to provide services and housing for volunteers who work on KCDC projects. The various buildings will be completed in stages based on KCDC's ability to raise funds.

Health, vocational and technical education, and training will enable the community to raise its standard of living. KCDC plans to provide educational programs such as maintaining health and preventing disease, effective organic farming methods to increase the yield of crops, and effective methods of starting a small business. Additionally, KCDC plans to provide micro-financing for villagers's small business plans.

KCDC cannot operate alone and plans to network and collaborate with other non-profit organizations in the U.S. and NGOs in Tanzania. John and Mary visited The Community Based Resource Center in Shinyanga, Tanzania. This NGO helps communities sustain water supplies and environmental sanitation systems. They also visited Kimkumaka, a NGO in Mwanza that trains villagers in the use of organic fertilizers, growing high yield, high protein crops and digging shallow rural wells. They have also contacted The Way of Life Foundation in the U.S. which provides leadership and community development training for young adults in developing countries. John and Mary identified 15 young adults from Kishapu who KCDC will sponsor to attend their training programs. These young adults will then work with KCDC to implement KCDC's mission.

Both the Aptos Times (September 1, 2008) and Santa Cruz Sentinel (September 20, 2008) have published feature articles on John and Mary's commitment to their KCDC mission. Plans are underway to implement several fundraising strategies during the next year. You can visit www.kishapu.org to learn more about KCDC.



Ken DeBow (Government) and Linda Palmer (English)

Ken DeBow and Linda Palmer retired from Sacramento State in December, 2006. Ken retired from the Government Department where he taught American and California governmental politics for 20 years, served as Graduate Coordinator, was for many years on the Faculty Senate and worked on

several departmental and university committees. Linda retired from the English Department, where for 21 years she taught American literature and was for some years the Writing Programs Coordinator and Department Vice Chair. Like Ken, she also served for several years on the Faculty Senate and several department and university committees.

Just weeks after they retired, Ken and Linda moved to Boulder, Colorado, which they'd chosen for their retirement home for its beauty, hiking trails, political activism, university culture, and proximity to a major airport and professional baseball. Though they had plans for a relaxed retirement, they were within a week, deeply involved with the Boulder County Democrats and quickly became coordinators of the 3500 Democratic volunteers in the county. This fall, not surprisingly, is an exciting and very busy time at the Democratic Headquarters, and Linda and Ken are organizing everything from float-building parties to precinct walks and phone banks. The quiet retirement plan was also altered when Ken and Linda's son Morgan and his wife Dolores and two children (ages 6 and 9) decided to move to Boulder from Washington, D.C. Linda volunteered one day a week last school year in Aidan's 3rd grade class and is also a bird monitoring volunteer with Boulder Co. Open Space.

Ken recently finished work on the 9th edition of his textbook (co-authored with colleague John Syer), *Power and Politics in California*, which was published earlier this spring. Linda just completed an article on Native American writer James Welch for an upcoming publication, *The Encyclopedia of American Literature*, forthcoming in 2009. Her colleague David Madden is one of the editors of that volume.

Linda and Ken are finding Boulder a wonderful fit for their interests, and aren't surprised that the latest AARP Magazine edition names Boulder as one of America's 10 healthiest cities: Ken and Linda hike on a significant trail system that begins just two blocks from their house, walk for most of their city activities (a big difference from their 40 mile commute to Sacramento from Amador County), hike regularly in Rocky Mountain Park, just 34 miles away, and canoe often in area lakes. They go to lots of baseball games (not the Giants, but the Rockies), enjoy theatre and concerts in both Boulder and Denver (an easy 40 minute bus ride away), and have enjoyed visits from several good friends and colleagues. They love being close-to-home grandparents, travel frequently (most recently to Europe and Belize) and love the proximity to two of their favorite spots, Santa Fe, New Mexico and The Grand Tetons, both of which they say they frequent "excessively." Their latest excitement came when they received tickets for Barack Obama's acceptance speech in Denver at the conclusion of the Democratic Convention. They think often of their great friends and colleagues from the university, and would welcome visits!

Editor's Note: I can attest to Linda and Ken's welcoming of colleagues. This past May, I was on vacation in Estes Park. They picked me up, gave me a tour of their favorite sites in Rocky Mountain National Park, and afterwards we had lunch at one of the local restaurants. As you can see from the photo, they are thriving in their mountainous wonderland!

New Books

The People's University: A History of the California State University

By Donald R. Gerth, President Emeritus

Forthcoming from Berkeley Public Policy Press, Summer 2009

Since its founding as a single institution in San Francisco in the years after the Gold Rush, the California State University has grown into a system of 23 campuses that enroll more than 450,000 students. The People's University is the story of that extraordinary growth. Today, the California State University is the state's 1,000 mile campus. Its programs reach every corner of the state, and its mission of access, affordability, and quality touches countless people of all ages. CSU is a critical component of California's celebrated system of public higher education, working in partnership with the 10 campuses of the University of California and the state's 109 Community College campuses. The People's University addresses the many facets of a set of comprehensive universities, institutions that share an overarching mission, and yet vary widely in the programs offered, from the technological emphases of two polytechnic campuses to agricultural programs at a campus in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley, to a campus in the state capital with first-rate public policy and government programs. Each of California's three systems of public higher education has to achieve greatness in its mission, and the missions are different. The mission of the California State University is to be "the people's university."

For more information on The People's University, go to:
igs.berkeley.edu/publications.

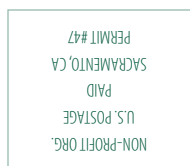
A Tale of Survival

By Tom Kando, Sociology

Colleague Ann Weldy (English), author of *I am a Woman, Odd Girl Out* and other works, offers the following testimonial:

"Kando has written a fascinating story of his rather hair-raising life as a kid growing up in WWII Hungary. His parents were starving artists in Paris when the Nazis marched in. They had to bolt back to Budapest in a cattle car. Their history takes off from there. The book is essentially a memoir with a blood-freezing escape from the Beastly Hun, and an odyssey afterwards through America. It's an intelligent work, with a great sense of humor."

The book can be purchased through the European American Publishing website: www.europeanamericanpub.com or you may call (916) 383-3568.



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