



The PACRA Pacer

Where Are They Now?

KENT and MARIA BACKART, Escondido, CA



The Backarts and their grandchildren, from left: Maria Backart; Adam 10; Amelia 10; Brittany 26; Catherine 13; Shana 30; Ashley 28; Taylor 16; Marissa 20; Sarah 23; Ciara 21; Andrew 15; Ryan 20; Corey 23; Jordan 21 and Kent Backart

In the 1950s, Kent worked in Research and Development at Goodyear Tire in Ohio. During this time he attended Ohio Wesleyan, receiving a BA in 1950. He then went to Akron University where he received a Master of Science in Chemistry in 1954. After moving to California, he attended Stanford, receiving another Masters Degree in 1957. This one was a Master of Arts in Education. While attending Stanford, he became a teaching assistant. He enjoyed this immensely; thus, Stanford is where he discovered that his true calling was in teaching.

Kent began his teaching career at Fullerton College in the fall of 1957. He then moved to Escondido, CA and was hired at Palomar College in 1962. At Palomar he taught chemistry, math, aviation and weather.

In the summer of 1977, Maria applied for and received a scholarship for women returning to education. This scholarship was offered by Professor Luz Garzon. Maria was a financial aid student receiving a work study grant. While she was enrolled in the Nursing Program, working towards an RN degree, she was simultaneously working in the office of Financial Aid. In 1980, after working in the Financial Aid office for three years, she applied for a position left open by

Bob Bowman. She was hired by Frank Hankin to work full-time.

While in the Nursing Program, one of the classes she was enrolled in was Dr. Backart's Chemistry class. They soon discovered they had a lot of 'chemistry' and they married in 1984. They were married in a double ceremony with her sister Liz and her husband Greg. Maria feels very fortunate to have found such a wonderful man as Kent. He is still her Knight in shining armor.

In 2007, Kent was diagnosed with prostate cancer and received chemotherapy and radiation. The cancer went into remission. In January 2013 his cancer returned. He is currently being treated with chemotherapy and is very confident that this treatment will be successful as well.

In 2011, the Backarts sold their 'party' house on Gamble Lane and moved into a quiet residential neighborhood in the Escondido Country Club area. Together they have seven wonderful daughters. Six daughters are Maria's from a previous marriage; Kent has one daughter from his previous marriage. The Backarts have fourteen grandchildren, one great-grand-son and are expecting another great-grandchild early next year.

"Life has been wonderful to us and we are enjoying our retirement. We continue to enjoy our travels around the world, but there is no place like home." ♦

New Board Members added:

Jo-Anne Lesser



Associate Professor/Counselor
Worked as a classified staff member in the following departments:
Business Education
Nursing Education
Counseling
Student Support Programs

Jo-Anne was hired as a Classified Staff member in 1976 in Business Education. Through various promotional opportunities she also worked in Nursing Education, Counseling and as Administrative Assistant to the Dean in Student Support Programs. She was active with the Classified Union, CCE-AFT as a Grievance Officer and also served as a representative on numerous negotiation teams.

In 2000 she was hired as a full-time counselor where she served on many campus-wide committees including the Scholarship Committee, Professional Development Committee, Facilities Planning Committee and many search committees.

Jo-Anne retired June 30, 2011. She is currently an adjunct professor teaching a college success class.

Jo-Anne lives in Escondido with husband, Norm. She enjoys volunteering at Palomar Hospital, travel, garden and swim. ♦


Judy Cater

Judy joined the faculty of Palomar College in September 1975 as a one-year sabbatical leave replacement librarian and was a faculty member and administrator for 38 years until her retirement in June 2013. Judy worked in cataloging as the Fine Arts and Acquisitions Librarian and served several terms as Library Department Chair. Judy served as Faculty President, Faculty Senate Vice President, chair of numerous governance, hiring and Senate committees and as a member of eleven accreditation site visit teams.

Appointed Interim Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences in August 2009, Judy enjoyed the opportunity to work with faculty, staff and students including the opening of the MD building and planning for a new Library, Child Development Center and Kinesiology/ Athletics Complex.



Judy lives in Carlsbad with her husband, Jack, and is enjoying having the time to visit family in England, including soon to be one-year old grandson Jack. ♦

Save the Date: Mark your calendars and plan to attend PACRA's Annual Meeting to be held on **Thursday, May 15, 2014**, 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. at The Old Spaghetti Factory, 111 North Twin Oaks Valley Road, San Marcos. Lunch will be served at noon. 

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Palomar College **FACTS**

- 🚩 **Current student population:**
About 30,000 full- and part-time students
- 🚩 **2012-13 graduations:**
1,816 associate degrees; 68 transfer degrees;
1,547 certificates of achievement
- 🚩 **Average student age:**
Associate degree, 27 years
Transfer degree, 23 years
Certificate of achievement, 28 years
- 🚩 **Oldest and youngest degree recipients:**
80 and 17
- 🚩 **Associate degrees by gender:**
Men 730; Women 1,086
- 🚩 **Fee for California residents:** \$46 per unit

Historical FACTS

Arlington National Cemetery... Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

- ❖ How many steps does the guard take during the walk across the Tomb of the Unknowns and why?
21 steps. It alludes to the twenty-one-gun salute, which is the highest honor given any military or dignitary.
- ❖ How long does the guard hesitate after the about face to begin the return walk and why?
21 seconds for the same reason as above.
- ❖ Why are the guard's gloves wet?
Gloves are moistened to prevent losing grip on the rifle.
- ❖ Does the guard carry the rifle on the same shoulder all the time? If not, why not?
The guard carries the rifle on the shoulder away from the Tomb. After the march across the path, the guard executes an about face and moves the rifle to the outside shoulder.
- ❖ How often are the guards changed?
Guards are changed every thirty minutes, twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year.
- ❖ What are the physical traits of the guard limited to?
For a person to apply for guard duty at the tomb he must be between 5' 10" and 6' 2" tall and his waist size cannot exceed 30".
They must commit two years of life to guard the Tomb, live in barracks under the Tomb, and cannot drink any alcohol on or off duty for the rest of their lives. They cannot swear in public for the rest of their lives and cannot disgrace the uniform or the Tomb in any way.
After two years, the guard is given a wreath pin that is worn on their lapel signifying they served as guard of the Tomb. There are only 400 presently worn. The guard must obey these rules for the rest of their lives or give up the wreath pin.
The shoes they wear are specifically made with very thick soles to keep the heat and cold from their feet. There are metal heel plates that extend to the top of the shoe in order to make the loud click as they come to a halt.
There are no wrinkles, folds or lint on the uniform. Guards dress for duty in front of a full-length mirror.
The first six months of duty a guard cannot talk to anyone nor watch television. All off-duty time is spent studying the 175 notable people laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery. A

guard must memorize who they are and where they are interred. Among the notables are:

*President William Taft
President John F. Kennedy
Robert Kennedy
Joe Lewis (the boxer)
Medal of Honor winner Audie L. Murphy,
the most decorated soldier of WWII*

In 2003, as Hurricane Isabelle was approaching Washington D.C., our U.S. Senate/House took two days off in anticipation of the storm. On the ABC evening news, it was reported that because of the dangers from the hurricane, the military members assigned the duty of guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier were given permission to suspend the assignment. They respectfully declined the offer. Soaked to the skin, marching in the pelting rain of a tropical storm, they said that guarding the Tomb was not just an assignment; it was the highest honor that can be afforded to a service person. The Tomb has been patrolled continuously, 24/7, since 1930. ◆



Palomar College *NEWS BRIEFS*

1 College Wins Broadcast Awards

Palomar College media productions were big winners at this year's 39th annual Pacific Southwest Emmy Awards, presented earlier this summer in Las Vegas. Shown with Emmys won for a PCTV-produced documentary about endangered sea otters are **Luke Bisagna** (left); **Mona Witherington**; **Dr. Lesley Blankenship-Williams**, assistant professor of Life Sciences; **Bill Wisneski** and **Kevin O'Hara**. Digital Broadcast Arts students (not pictured) who won Emmys are **Stormy Buonantony**, **Schie Masuda**, **Rebecca Peters**, **Zoya Popova** and **Christopher Wood**.



2 New Performing Arts Complex Opens

Palomar College celebrated the opening of its Performing Arts Complex with a ceremonial ribbon-cutting by the community college district's governing board on Friday, September 20. College President **Robert Deegan** led the event, which included remarks from Board President **Nancy Chadwick**; Vice President of Instructional Services **Berta Cuaron**; and **Norma Miyamoto**, Dean of Arts, Media, Business and Computer Sciences. The new complex houses a remodeled Howard Brubeck Theatre; a 'black box' theater for smaller, specialized productions; two dance studios; offices; and a courtyard that doubles as a performance space. Construction on the Performing Arts Complex began in July 2011, using money from Proposition M, the \$694 million bond passed by voters in November 2006 to modernize the campus.

Texas billionaire wants pension reform in CA



Texas hedge fund billionaire **John Arnold** is taking his campaign to reform America's public pension systems to California. He is looking to fund groups supporting a ballot initiative that would scale back what critics regard as public employee pension deals. Arnold amassed his wealth, estimated at \$3 billion, running Centaurus, a natural gas trading hedge fund. Last year he closed Centaurus and turned full-time to running

a philanthropic foundation, with assets of \$2.1 billion. He obviously has the money to fund campaigns if he so chooses. Arnold has stated that his goal is to revamp public employee pensions, but has yet to commit any resources in California. The Retired Public Employees' Association of California (RPEA) will be actively monitoring this and will report to us if and when information progresses. ◆



LEGISLATIVE WATCHDOG

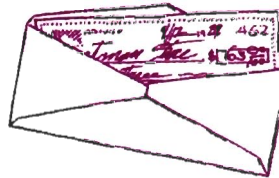


AB 507 (Garcia, D-Bell Gardens)

This bill increases, beginning January 1, 2014, the existing \$2000 post retirement death benefit paid to the beneficiary of a school member of the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS). Each successive year the amount is increased until the benefit reaches \$6,000 on January 1, 2018. Beginning April 1, 2018, the death benefit is increased in the same manner as retiree cost-of-living adjustments. According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee analysis, the increase in the death benefit would result in an immediate increase in accrued liability for CalPERS.

In keeping with their policy, CalPERS would adjust the rates for schools after the benefit goes into effect and after their fiscal year review in mid-2014. At that time, CalPERS estimates the

accrued liability for the schools pool at almost \$750 million. The CalPERS policy is to amortize the liability over a 20-year period. As such, school contributions would increase by an estimated \$61 million in 2014 - 2015, growing to \$107 million in 2034 - 2035. Based on this estimate, AB 507 has been suspended and held by Assembly Appropriations Committee, and it has been made a two-year bill. Although the bill is technically dead for the remainder of this year, efforts are continuing to pursue it again next year. ◆



AJR 7 (Bonta, D-Alameda)

This resolution requests the President and the United States Congress to exclude Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid from being a part of any legislation to reduce the federal deficit, expresses the Legislature's opposition to cuts to those programs, and calls on California's representatives to the United States Congress to vote against cuts to

these programs and instead consider improving those systems in ways that would strengthen their protections. AJR 7 has been chaptered. Resolutions, such as this, do not need to go to the Governor for signature. Once they have passed both houses, they are simply sent to the Secretary of State for recordation. ◆

Privacy Issue

When CalPERS first announced it was adding a searchable database to its website putting retiree information on-line for all to see, the Retired Public Employees' Association of California (RPEA) immediately cried foul. RPEA rallied other labor unions and retiree groups to oppose the new on-line database and engaged the legislature in its effort. RPEA set meetings with leadership and recommended that the Legislature hold

interim hearing on the privacy issue regarding retiree information. Hopefully, this will generate some acceptable ideas and curtail the increasing intrusion into retirees' personal and financial lives. In the meantime, RPEA and others have asked CalPERS to delay implementation until after the legislative hearings have concluded. CalPERS has agreed. ◆

The seeds of anger are always there. But when you notice, when you keep alive your understanding, they have no choice to manifest. Understanding is something that stays with you, and practicing the precepts, practicing meditation, helps you deepen your understanding all the time.

Thich Nhat Hanh

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Important Retiree **UPDATE**

PACRA has been advised that approximately 15% of CalPERS retirees will soon receive a letter requiring action of federal tax withholding elections from their monthly warrant. Since 1982, CalPERS has allowed its retirees to choose a deduction by dollar amount, without indicating any other type of withholding election. For example: Some members provided instructions to withhold \$500 or some other amount each month for federal taxes. This is known as a specified dollar amount or flat tax withholding.

CalPERS has determined it is not allowable to withhold only a flat dollar amount for federal taxes. The flat dollar amount is allowed only in addition to another appropriate withholding election, such as married with three exemptions. CalPERS retirees who have indicated only a flat

tax withholding will receive a letter from CalPERS to select an appropriate withholding election in addition to or in place of the current flat amount. Retirees who do not respond by January 1, 2014, will have their federal tax withholding default to married with three exemptions until they submit a revised tax withholding form. CalPERS is expected to mail the letters between October 21 and November 18.

If retirees have questions about the letter they can call the CalPERS Contact Center at 888-225-7377.

