

Fall 2009

Ventura County Community College District Retirees' Association

# The Monitor

## Settlement Court Date Set for October 30

We now have a firm date, October 30, 2009, when the Ventura County Superior Court will consider the final negotiated settlement between the VCCCD Retirees' Association, *et al.*, and the Ventura County Community College District. The hearing will take place at the Ventura County Superior Court, 800 South Victoria Avenue, Ventura, California, at 8:30 a.m. in Department 43. Attorneys for both parties will be present.

The judge is expected to give preliminary approval to the settlement and the class action, approval to the official notice to be mailed to members of the class action, and approval of a date by which the District must mail the notice. The judge will also establish a date for the next court hearing where responses to the notice, if any, will be heard, and a date on which the judge is expected to give his final approval to the settlement.

It has taken six months since our annual membership meeting on March 25, 2009, for attorneys and clients to work out the language in the exhibits that are attached to the settlement agreement. These exhibits include (A) the list of class members, (B) a schedule of increases to the aggregate baseline amount by 6% annually, (C) the reimbursement claim form, (D) a schedule of the maximum cost to the District for excess costs by fiscal year, (E) notice of pendency of class action, proposed settlement and hearing date for court approval, (F) order granting preliminary approval of class action settlement.

The Executive Board, Benefits Committee and named plaintiffs were kept informed of all developments while negotiators for the Retirees' Association — Gary Johnson, Bob Long, and myself — worked closely with Tom Sharpe, the Association's attorney, to review and work out the final language of the exhibits. A copy of the settlement and its exhibits will be posted on the VCCCDRA web site (<http://www.vcccdra.org>) after it receives preliminary approval by the court on October 30.

You are certainly welcome to attend the court hearing on October 30. Some of us have already declared an interest in attending the hearing to observe the proceedings of this important moment in the history of our Retirees' Association.

Rene G. Rodriguez  
Past President

## Benefits Committee Report

It has been four and a half years since the VCCCD Retirees' Association first engaged legal counsel and eventually filed a lawsuit against the District over changes in what we believe were District promises regarding Blue Cross Health Care coverage. It has been sixteen months since we reached a one-page settlement agreement with the District. The final draft of that agreement has swelled to a comparatively complex 28 pages, plus exhibits.

The Benefits Committee, led by the efforts of Bob Long, Rene Rodriguez, and myself, have carefully monitored development of the language to keep it faithful to the agreement. The Benefits Committee, the Executive Board, all class representatives to the lawsuit, and members of the District Board of Trustees have signed off on the settlement agreement so it can be sent to Court for judicial approval.

We have had several general membership meetings where terms of the settlement were presented and questions were responded to either by Benefits Committee members or our attorney. Those in attendance, one hundred or more, with only a very few exceptions, heartily voted in favor of the settlement.

The Committee encourages your continued support of the settlement through the judicial process. Once the settlement has been adjudicated, the Retirees' Association will provide detailed guidance to help retirees take maximum advantage of the protections in the settlement.

### BLUE CROSS CHANGES FOR 2009-2010:

The two changes that occurred in the Blue Cross Plan for 2009-2010 affect only classified and management retirees and not faculty. The doctor visit co-pay was increased from \$15 to \$20 per visit and a \$100 co-pay was added to Emergency Ward hospital visits if you are not admitted for an overnight stay. The objective is to encourage use of your regular doctor or urgent care facilities rather than hospital Emergency facilities.

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**KEEP ALL MEDICAL RECEIPTS**

To receive reimbursements from the District for reimbursable expenses agreed to in the settlement, retirees must be able to document expenses with receipts. We **urge** retirees to keep receipts for every medical expense you or your dependents incur. We will provide more information on the reimbursement process after the settlement is approved by the Superior Court.

**THANK YOU!**

All of us in the VCCCD Retirees' Association owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to members of the Benefits Committee, who devoted hundreds of hours over the last four years to the benefits issue and resulting lawsuit. The settlement would not

have been reached without the consistent support, encouragement, feedback, and wisdom of the Committee members:

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Dave Thomas     | Vivian Lockard |
| Barbara Hoffman | Gil Ramirez    |
| Bob Lopez       | Gary Morgan    |
| Manny Turse     | Bob Long       |
| John Woolley    | Rene Rodriguez |
| Harry Culotta   | Don Matthews   |
| Stan Bowers     | Orlene Bowers  |
| Don Medley      | Gary Johnson   |

Gary Johnson  
Past President and Chair, Benefits Committee

## **Tribute to an American Hero: George McNeely** **by John Woolley, Bob Long, and Gary Johnson**

On Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, the Ventura College family lost its greatest benefactor and most loyal supporter with the passing of George Burl McNeely. George would have been 96 years old in October 2009.

George was a faculty member and administrator for 34 years from 1941-1974, with leave time taken for valiant and courageous service in the Second World War. During his 25 years as a teacher, Ventura County was rural with a decidedly agricultural base, and George taught agriculture and provided the department's leadership. In his last 9 years he served the college as Dean of Men, Dean of Students, and Director of Financial Aid, and provided a steady hand through the challenging late sixties.

George lived a phenomenally rich and active life well into his 90s, and while it is impossible to justifiably summarize his life, five themes predominated: farming/agriculture, World War II Naval service, education and Ventura College, community service, and worldwide travel.

George was a consummate Midwestern agrarian who grew up with the rhythms and responsibilities and influences of the family farm, and whose inherent personal frugality was indelibly reinforced when the farm was lost as a casualty of farm failures in the depths of the Great Depression. As with many Depression-era young men, George took to the rails heading west and moved from one Hooverville to the next looking for work and trying to survive. In Oregon, a farmer he labored for encouraged him to go to college to get an education if he wanted to make a place for himself.

Following that sound advice, he returned to his beloved Illinois and worked on nearby farms to put himself through Northern Illinois State University, earning a degree in agriculture. He then completed a Masters Degree from Colorado State University, and the recommendation of his graduate advisor brought

him to his career in Ventura, California. Ventura High School and Junior College (as it was then known) comprised the last two years of high school and the first two years of college and was one of eight such institutions in Southern California.

In addition to teaching agriculture, George provided active leadership for youth farm-oriented programs like 4-H and was long-time Director of Livestock Operations and agricultural events for the Ventura County Fairgrounds. In the last two years before his retirement, George provided State Department sponsored agricultural teacher training through Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, to help set up agricultural programs at colleges in Thailand. In keeping with his agricultural roots, George left two farms in Illinois to his heirs. He checked the newspaper daily for corn and soybean prices so he could follow the probable value of his crops. He lived to see the farming bust of the 1930s turn into a very valuable enterprise.

Following Pearl Harbor, George, like a number of other men and women faculty, sought leadership responsibility in the war effort. George left his college teaching position in 1942 to work for a civilian contractor in the Aleutian Islands, southwest of the Alaskan Peninsula. The area was bombed by the Japanese in conjunction with the Battle of Midway.

George returned to Illinois to enlist and was notified of his acceptance for Officer Candidate Training at Cornell University, followed by amphibious landing craft training in the Chesapeake. He shipped to England as a Naval Officer and after another year and a half of amphibious landing exercises along the English coast, served as commanding officer of a 15 man crew on an LCT (landing craft, tank, amphibious landing craft) in "Operation Overlord" in the D-Day landing against entrenched German positions along the French Normandy coast. George's vessel carried 80 fighting men from the Fourth Infantry Division of the Army, six tanks and all of their requisite gasoline requirements. As the

## American Hero: George McNeely (from previous page)

operation unfolded, George's LCT-525 was in the first wave of LCT's to make a successful landing on what was designated "Utah" beach on the bloodiest day of the initial assault. During the next 36 hours, he successfully piloted his craft 53 times, bringing troops and tanks from offshore supply ships to the shore, with most landings coming under heavy fire and George having to pick his way through sunken craft and their cargos.

Following six months of continual landings George was returned to the States, anticipating reassignment to the Pacific Theater ahead of the invasion of Japan, but with the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, that did not materialize. He was discharged as a Lieutenant Commander, and continued in the Naval Reserve after returning to Ventura College.

George's service and heroism was featured last year in one of a series of articles highlighting the experiences of World War II Veterans (August 30, 2008, *Ventura County Star*). The war was a defining period in George's life, and he subsequently traveled extensively to visit and pay homage to major battle sites in the European and Pacific theaters of the war.

George was profoundly overtaken with emotion upon any recollection of the war and seemingly committed himself to generous service to others as appreciation for his survival. George's fondest possession was the weather-tattered American flag that had flown above his command station on his LCT. George was precisely whom Tom Brokaw was recognizing and honoring when he saluted America's "Greatest Generation."

While famously frugal in his own life, George was amazingly generous in his support of education and in assisting students in fulfilling their educational aspirations. He was a founding member of the Ventura College Foundation Board, and through his contacts and friendships in the community, he was the key figure in acquiring funding for Guthrie Hall. The conference center in the Math-Science building bears his name in honor of his contribution to the building. George donated hundreds of thousands of dollars for student scholarships provided by the Foundation. No one has given more generously and loyally to the college than George. With equivalent generosity and dedication to community service, he was also an active member of the Ventura Breakfast Lion's Club from 1968 until the present.

George was an inveterate traveler, with the objective of getting as close to the peoples and cultures he wanted to experience as possible. He really wanted to know what all corners of the world were like, especially the Third World, and mostly on his own, he traveled again and again throughout every continent and Antarctica. People and their differences fascinated him and he usually took the roads, rails or rivers less traveled to get the most intimate and authentic experiences. In his late 80s, typically of George, he drove from California to the end of the road

in the Canadian Northwest Territories just to assuage his curiosity as to what was there. In his 90s George traveled across Europe via its river systems, traveled throughout Thailand to revisit the time he had taught there, and took a trip to the Amazon. At 93 he drove the Alcan Highway to Alaska by himself.

George was the best friend and companion anyone could have. He was intelligent, thoughtful, sensitive, empathetic, tolerant, worldly, fun, humble, principled to the core, ready for anything, appreciative of everything he had and had done, and it was impossible for everyone he met not to like him instantly. He had a life story few can aspire to, let alone match. The Ventura College family has lost one of its most precious jewels, but his great generosity in support of students will keep on giving.

## In Loving Memory

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of our colleagues and friends, whose memory shall remain in our hearts and minds. Our deepest sympathy is extended to their families.

Eloise Andrews

Gerald Bridgeman

Jack Farrell

James R. Gayle

Aster Ikezoye

Paul Jacobs

Joyce Lundy

George B. McNeely

Snoda Miller

David Robles

Rachel Santoya

Ray Sheller

Barbara Smith

Betty True

# Membership Updates

## Don Medley, Founder, VCCCDRA

**THERE ARE MANY NEW RETIREES, AND WE NEED ADDRESSES/PHONE NUMBERS/EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE!!! If you can help, please call Don Medley at 805-482-8761 or send an email to [don.medley@verizon.net](mailto:don.medley@verizon.net). Thank you for your help.**

James Allyn	Donald Anderson	Ronert Anderson	Dianne Armstrong	Barbara Baker
Beverly Barker	Jeffery Barsch	Francis Bianchino	Elizabeth Bowker	Ignacio Borunda
James Botting	Madaline Braun	Patricia Burkard	Carl Burkner	Frank Castro
Carol Coltrin	Christy Corbett	Patricia Earl	Sara Essa-Galloway	Katherine Felter
Ruby Filar	Dallas Flanigan	Lynn Greig	Pablo R. Gurrola	Lucia Haro
Glen Hisayasu	Erlinda Tuyor Ispahani	Iva Jeffreys	Richard LaPaglia	Teresa Lara
Shiowling Lauly	Jeri Lupton	Lyn MacConnaire	George Martinez	Michael McGann
Michael Munoz	Norlene Neal	Patricia Olson	Garland Orr	Steve Price
Conrad Reider	Roberto Renteria	Della Rhodes	John Roach	Harmony Rodriguez
Carl B. Smith	Carol Smith	Larry Smithson	Kathlyn Spencer	Kathy Stinson
Sharon Stout	Joan Thompson	John Thomsen	Myra Toth	Eileen Welser
Gerald White	Ernest Williams	Louise Zitnik		

**Please correct your roster with the following address, phone number, and/or e-mail changes:**

Herbert Anson	Eleanor Austin	Barbara Buttner	Carol Coltrin	Ray DiGuilio
Francis W. Carrignan	Rose Marie Castro	Jesse "Russ" Emory	Carole Eustice	Paul F. Fink
Bruce Garber	Don Henderson	Dolly Kessner	Clara Kimbrough	Sandra Kinghorn
Mary Lynn	Katherine Brooks Lewis	Angela Marquez	Connie Nikirk	Maricarmen Ohara
Priscilla Partridge de Garcia	Linda Porter	Candy Ramirez	Robert Reynolds	Daniel Rios
Linda Rubinstei	William Shilley	Brenda Shubert	Diane Stephens	

# Membership Updates

(from previous page)

Please correct your roster with the following address, phone number, and/or e-mail changes:

Stephen Tobias                      Charlotte Udd                      Mary Louise Verbeck                      Jim Whalen                      James Wyman

Name change: Yvonne Bodle to Yvonne Bodle-Farris

## HOW DO YOU WISH TO BE LISTED IN THE ROSTER?

It is time to publish a new name and address roster for the VCCCD Retirees' Association. To insure that we publish only what you approve, please complete the following, detach this page, and return the information to me or email me at [don.medley@verizon.net](mailto:don.medley@verizon.net) by **January 10, 2010**. Thank you for your help. **If you DO NOT respond, we will publish your name, address, telephone and email address that are on file.**

**If you received this copy of the *Monitor* with a handwritten address, it means that the Association does not have your address. We prepare a label with only your name and the District Office writes in the address. Please help us!!!**

Don B. Medley  
110 Flora Vista Avenue  
Camarillo, CA 93012-5170  
[Don.medley@verizon.net](mailto:Don.medley@verizon.net)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zipcode: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone : \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) unlisted do not publish Email: \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ Include Name, Address, Telephone Number and Email.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Include Name, Address, and Email but not telephone number.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Include Only Name, and Telephone Number.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Include Only Name, and Email.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Include Name, Telephone Number and Email.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Include Name only.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not include my name in the roster, **I will not receive a copy of the roster.**



**Ventura County Community College District Retirees' Association**

Fall 2009

**Ventura County Community  
College District Retirees'  
Association**

Post Office Box 6216  
Ventura, CA 93006-6216

**Look for us on the Web at**

**<http://www.vcccdra.org>**

**Executive Board**

Harry Culotta, President (Interim)

Rene G. Rodriguez, Past President

Vice President (vacant)

Vivian Lockard, Secretary-Treasurer

Gary Johnson, Benefits Committee Chair

Don Medley, Membership Committee Chair

Gary Morgan, Political Committee Chair

**VCCCD Retirees' Association**

**P.O. Box 6216**

**Ventura, CA 93006-6216**

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