

A HISTORY OF FODARA

By Lescher Dowling

I took early retirement from teaching Photography at Foothill, in June, 1983 and started teaching an evening photo class Fall Quarter. In January I received a letter from the District inviting me to a reception for all retirees to be held January 20th, 1984 at the Cupertino Senior Center across from De Anza College.

I was curious to see the new Senior Center and also wondered about the life style of my fellow retirees. The reception turnout was light and there were few people I knew. From their name tags they seemed to be mostly from De Anza College. There were several people from the District Retirement Committee acting as hosts and after everyone was coffeed and cookied, we were asked to be seated. **Gerry Kaspar** welcomed us and outlined a proposed steering committee to form a District retiree organization.

I was standing in the back observing as a sign-up sheet was passed among the crowd when **Venice Ostwald** spoke to me. Venice was one of the few De Anza people I knew because I had met her at a Palo Alto Church. She said, "Lescher, you're retired, why don't you sign up?" There were about fourteen names on the list and they only needed nine so I figured I was safe and signed my name.

In 1983 there were 185 retirees from the Foothill-De Anza Community College District. This included certificated and classified personnel from both Foothill and De Anza Colleges and the District Office. Of these retirees, 36 retired in 1983 and 25 in 1982 but over 50% of the 185 had retired within the past five of the previous twelve years going back to 1971, when the earliest living retiree left the District. With the growing number of retirees, **Chancellor Tom Fryer** decided there was need for a group to act as liaison between the retirees and the District. He gave this task to the District Retirement Committee* chaired by **Gerry Kaspar**, Director, Human Resources.

Gerry Kaspar's first meeting was held in the District offices in June, 1983 and included two retirees from certificated, classified and management staff, plus a representative from each of the campus

organizations for a total of sixteen members. The need, purpose and possible activities of a retiree organization were discussed over the next several months culminating in a meeting on January 9, 1984, between **Harry Harvey**, management retiree, **Alice Jarrett**, classified retiree and **Gerry Kaspar** in which they planned the first retiree staff social to be held on January 20th at the Cupertino Senior Center.

I received a letter from **Gerry Kaspar** saying that the first meeting of the Organizing Committee for Retirees would be held February 8, 1984 at the De Anza Staff House and would I please attend. The members were **Fran Coolidge, Bill Cutler, Glenna Dow, Lescher Dowling, Marie Faber, Harry Harvey, Alice Jarrett, Dorothy Jeschein and Bob Olson**. Fran, Harry and Alice had been members of the District Retirement Committee. Alice and Harry acted as Co-Chairs of our new committee.

At the first meeting we agreed that informing and communicating with the district retirees was our most important function, but we should also provide a means for their socializing. **Bill Cutler** volunteered to draft a newsletter and **Fran Coolidge** to serve as retiree representative on the District Benefits Committee. This was at a time when the District was having problems with the administrators of our health program, The Foundation For Medical Care, which preceded Beach Street. The District would go through three more health care administrators before settling on the current PERS Health Care Plan.

At our second meeting, March 7th, **Bill Cutler** presented a draft of the newsletter, which he called "Emeritus." We felt the name reflected the certificated but not the classified staff. "After-Workers," a name proposed by Bill, was voted the name of the organization but it never caught on. I suggested "*After-Words*" as a name for the newsletter. The first issue of "*After-Words*" announced a "Coffee" social planned for April 18th at the De Anza Staff House from 10:00 AM to 12:00 noon. Although the "Coffee" was mainly a social affair, suggestions were solicited regarding future activities for the organization and a name.

At subsequent meetings a schedule was worked out for Board meetings every other month during the school year in September, November, January, March and May. Retiree social meetings would be held on the alternate months of October, December, February, April and

June. For financing our activities the Board settled on annual dues of five dollars. It might be noted here that after the first dues payment arrived, **Alice Jarrett** opened a bank account for the organization under the name “FDARO.”

Besides publishing “*After-Words*,” **Bill Cutler** also offered to rough draft a constitution and by-laws as he was doing the same for another organization, SHHH, “Self Help for Hard of Hearing.” Bill had a hearing disability and brought several hearing devices to the meetings, one of which was an amplifier he placed in the center of the conference table with a cord running to the receiver in his ear.

On June 12th a meeting was held in **Tom Clements’** office at Foothill between District Budget Committee representatives **Richard Wright, Harry Harvey** and **Tom Clements** and Retiree Steering Committee representatives **Fran Coolidge, Bill Cutler, Lescher Dowling, Alice Jarrett** and **Bob Olson**. It was established that all retirees would receive Gold Cards granting them the same privileges as full-time staff, including free or reduced admission to cultural events, use of campus libraries and free parking permits. All retirees would also receive “*After-Words*” whether they paid the five-dollar dues or not and the District would pay for the mailing. The membership drive letter mailed first class each fall would be paid for by the retiree organization.

In September **Alice Jarrett** was elected by the board as its first president. The name “*FODARA*” (**FO**othill **De Anza** **R**etirees **A**ssociation) was proposed by **Bill Lambert** in a letter to **Bill Cutler**. It was chosen as the organization’s official name with only one dissenting vote. **Bob Olson** said *FODARA* sounded like an old hat. **Bill Cutler** presented the final draft of the new constitution and by-laws. I made up a letterhead for *FODARA* by combining the three logos of the District, Foothill and De Anza. A list of 110 Charter Members of *FODARA* as of September 1, 1984, was published in *After-Words*.

One basic tenant of *FODARA* is that all retirees are equal whether they were administration, classified, certificated or former district board members. When selecting candidates for the board of directors the nominating committee seeks to balance the board between male and female, Foothill, De Anza and District and certificated and classified.

Because the De Anza Staff House was rented to the Cupertino Chamber of Commerce, the last program was held on October 17th, at which time **Barbara Beck** gave a presentation on Estate Planning. The First December Holiday Luncheon was held at the De Anza Student Center December 12, 1984. On June 12, 1985, **Marie Faber** and her husband catered the first Retiree Picnic at De Anza Park in Sunnyvale.

In September 1985 I was elected the second president and *After-Words* editor. **Fran Coolidge** and **Glenna Dow** left the Board and were replaced by **John Freemuth** and **Joan Carlson**, who had been serving on the Social Committee. We held the first Valentine Luncheon in February 1986 at the Blue Pheasant, Blackberry Farm.

The following year **Bill Cutler**, **Marie Faber** and **John Freemuth** left the Board. Bill had been elected National President of his SHHH organization and John had married and moved to Aptos. **Jean Bellefeuille**, who had been serving on the Social Committee, **Dorothy Anderson** and **Robert Baumgardner** were chosen new members to replace them. Jean was elected the third president.

In 1986, under **Dorothy Anderson's** guidance, term limits were initiated with revisions to the constitution and by-laws. The Board was set up as a nine-member panel with one-third of the members replaced each year. Due to volunteer replacements not always being available, the Board frequently voted exceptions to the one-third rule. In 1987, under **Dorothy Anderson's** Presidency, a Student Book Fund was set up at each college campus, but was replaced in 1988 by a \$500 scholarship at each campus. Currently *FODARA* awards two \$1,000 scholarships at each campus.

Epilogue

I continued to serve on the *FODARA* Board for the next twenty years, serving as VP numerous times, Treasurer for two years and three more times as President. After the first Annual Retirees Picnic, I took over catering the picnic from 1987 through 2005, assisted by De Anza Food Services. In 2005 I went off the Board to serve as *FODARA* Representative on the District Benefits Committee, reporting committee actions to the board. In 2010 I retired from the Benefits

Committee and active board participation. Dorothy and I attended all *FODARA* social functions such as the October Pizza “Thing,” December Holiday Luncheon, February Valentine Luncheon and the Annual Retirees Picnic in June. Several years ago the Valentine Luncheon was moved to a new venue and failed after the third year. In 2014 through 2017 I brought the Valentine Luncheon back to the Blue Pheasant Restaurant. Now in my 100th year I will continue to attend *FODARA* social events as long as I am able.

In 2024 FODARA will celebrate its Fortieth Anniversary.

* 1984 District Retirement Committee:

Alice Jarrett – Retired Classified	Mickey Corbett – Retired Manager
Harry Harvey – Retired Manager	Fran Coolidge – Retired Faculty
Clarence O’Donnell – Retired Faculty	Mary Desper – Foothill Senate
Venice Ostwald – De Anza Senate	Don Buck – Faculty Association
Mick Sullivan – Faculty Association	Wilma Corbella – CSEA Unit A
Evelyn Quintos – CSEA Unit B	Joe Kimble – Mgmt Assoc (De Anza)
Nayan McNeill – Mgmt Assoc (Foothill)	Margaret McCutchen – Personnel Services
Nilo Sarmiento – Personnel Services	Jim Fitzgerald – Retired President
Gloria Mitchell – Older Adult Education	Fran Coolidge – FODARA